THE NWO: WHAT YOU *REALLY* NEED TO KNOW

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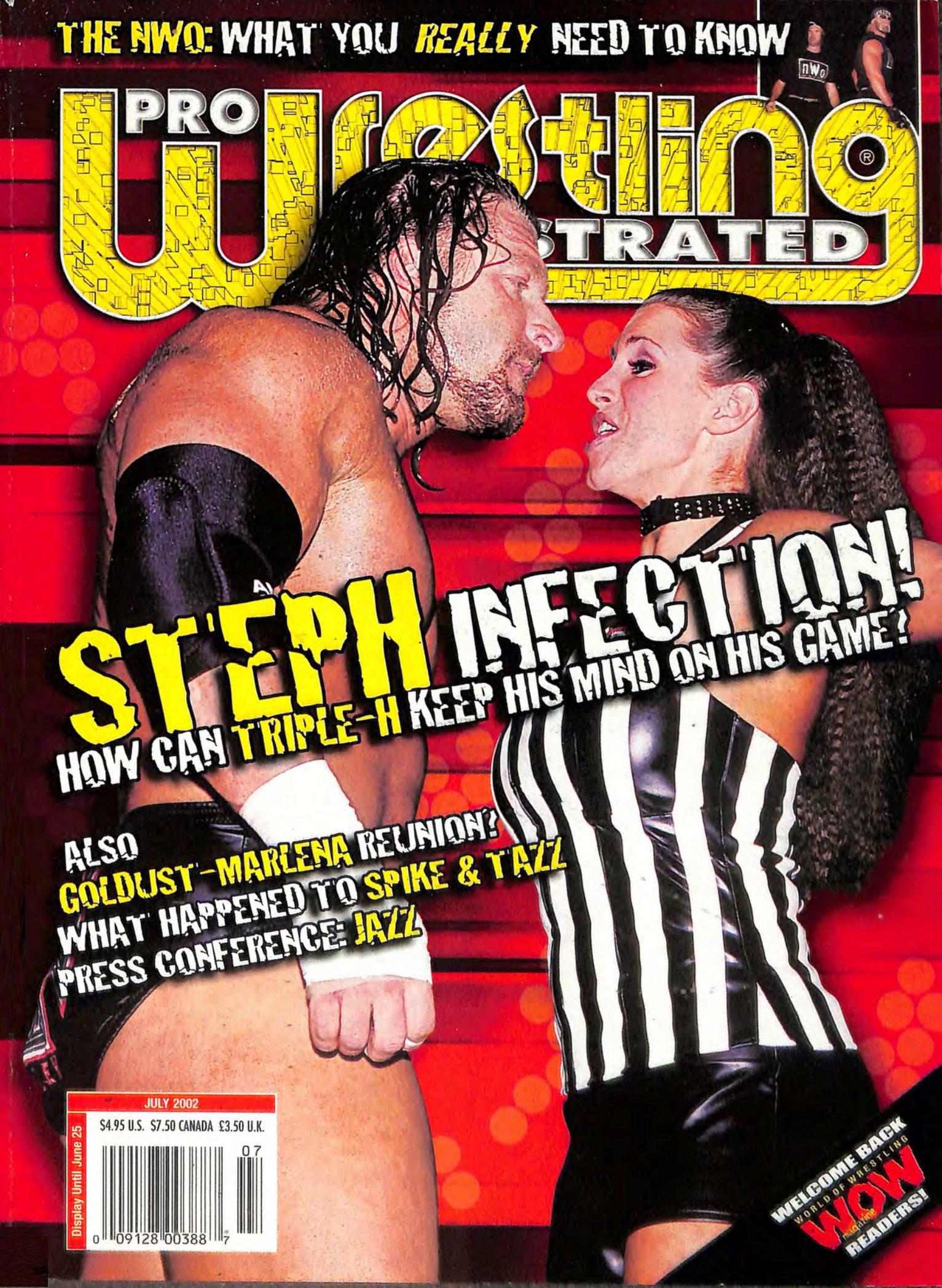

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from the desk of...

I HAVE TO admit it and I hate myself for it, but I got a little bit of perverse pleasure out of the way Randy Savage played WWA owner Andrew McManus in the days and hours leading up to the company's initial U.S. pay-per-view at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas on February 24.

Savage grew up in this business and made his debut in 1973, when McManus was 11 years old. He's learned over the years exactly how to take advantage of every opportunity presented to him. I do not mean to disrespect McManus, a highly regarded rock promoter in his native Australia, but Andy, mate, this is not rock 'n' roll, and Randy Savage is not Belinda Carlisle.

Savage befriended McManus and, by all accounts, gave him every indication that he would sign on with the WWA. During an interview with Alex Marvez at the end of January for wrestlingobserver.com, McManus was quoted as saying that Savage was signed for the next two years. When the WWA started to advertise a PPV main event of Savage vs. WWA champion Jeff Jarrett, the "Macho Man" had all the leverage a veteran, in-demand, independent contractor could ever hope for.

Negotiations stretched until the date of the event, but the two sides could not come together. There were stars on the card, but aside from Bret Hart (who was in a non-participatory role as commissioner) and Scott Steiner (who is still limited by injuries), Savage was the only superstar. His demands were very high. McManus, who is astute enough to understand that only by being fiscally responsible can he hope to keep the WWA alive long enough to be a long-term success, decided against giving in. He opened the broadcast with a statement that Savage would not be appearing, placing the blame on "Savage's representatives," who he said halted contract negotiations.

McManus may be a lifelong wrestling fan, but now he's getting an education on the other side of the business. He may or may not have been misled into thinking he had Savage in the fold, but there is no excuse for making a public statement that he was signed when he was not. The end result is that those who attended the event or paid for it on pay-per-view were left feeling duped.

I can't blame a man for trying to get everything he can out of the star power he has been able to build over a long and glorious career. Truthfully, Savage was in a no-lose situation. Given the circumstances, one of three outcomes could have come to pass: McManus could have acquiesced and given Savage what he wanted; Savage could have skipped the show—which would almost inevitably be a money-loser—and used it as a negotiating ploy for the future; or he could have told the WWA to kiss off and scored points with a man whose name sounds like McManus.

Hopefully, McManus learned some valuable lessons in all of this. I know that might sound condescending, considering all McManus has accomplished during his career, but wrestling, particularly wrestling in today's climate, is a me-first, me-now business. The idea of trying to build his business for the long-term using men who have no guarantee they'll be fit to perform tomorrow is completely incongruous. It is up to McManus to reconcile that discrepancy without alienating the people who are the most essential to any business—the paying customers.

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Publisher

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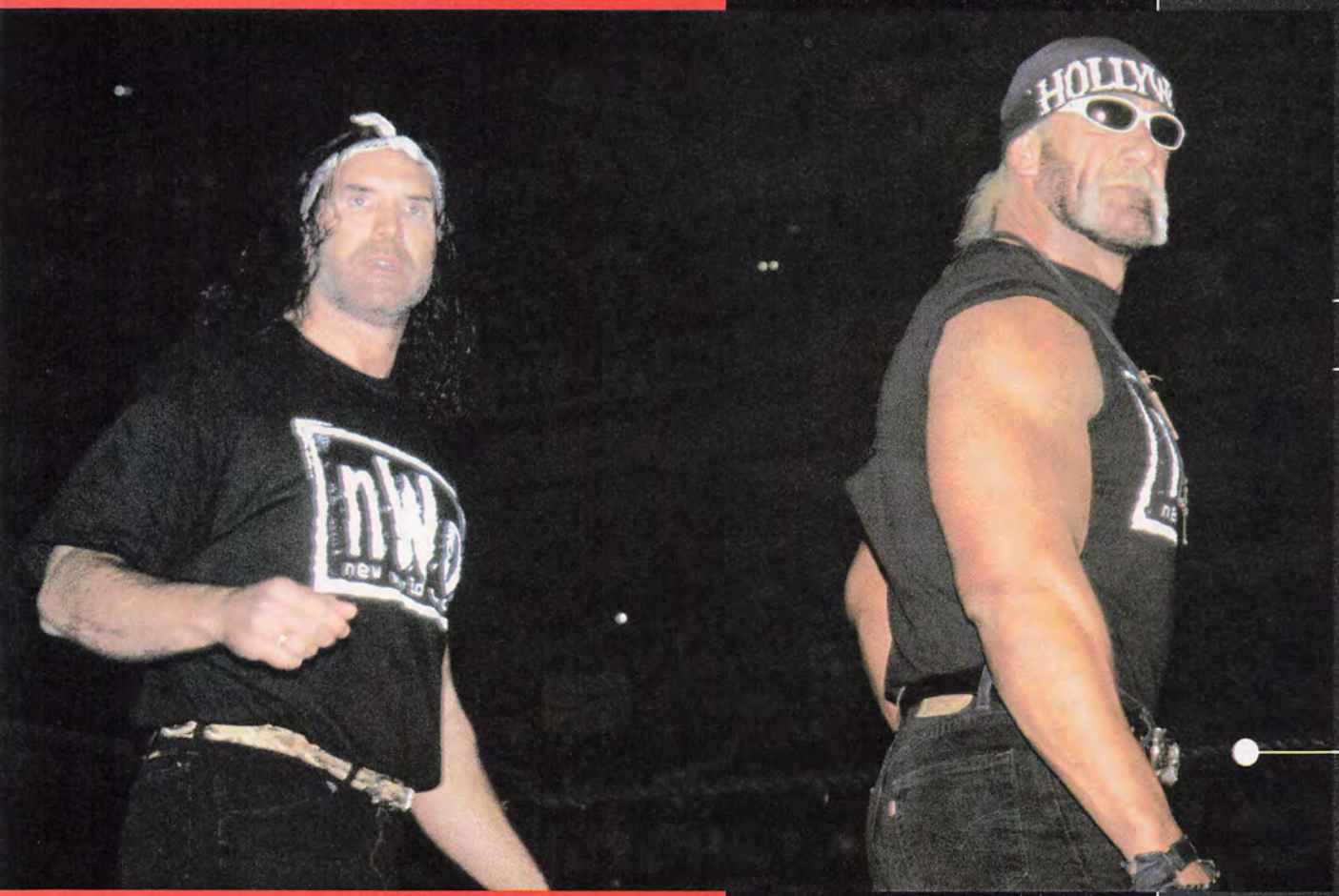
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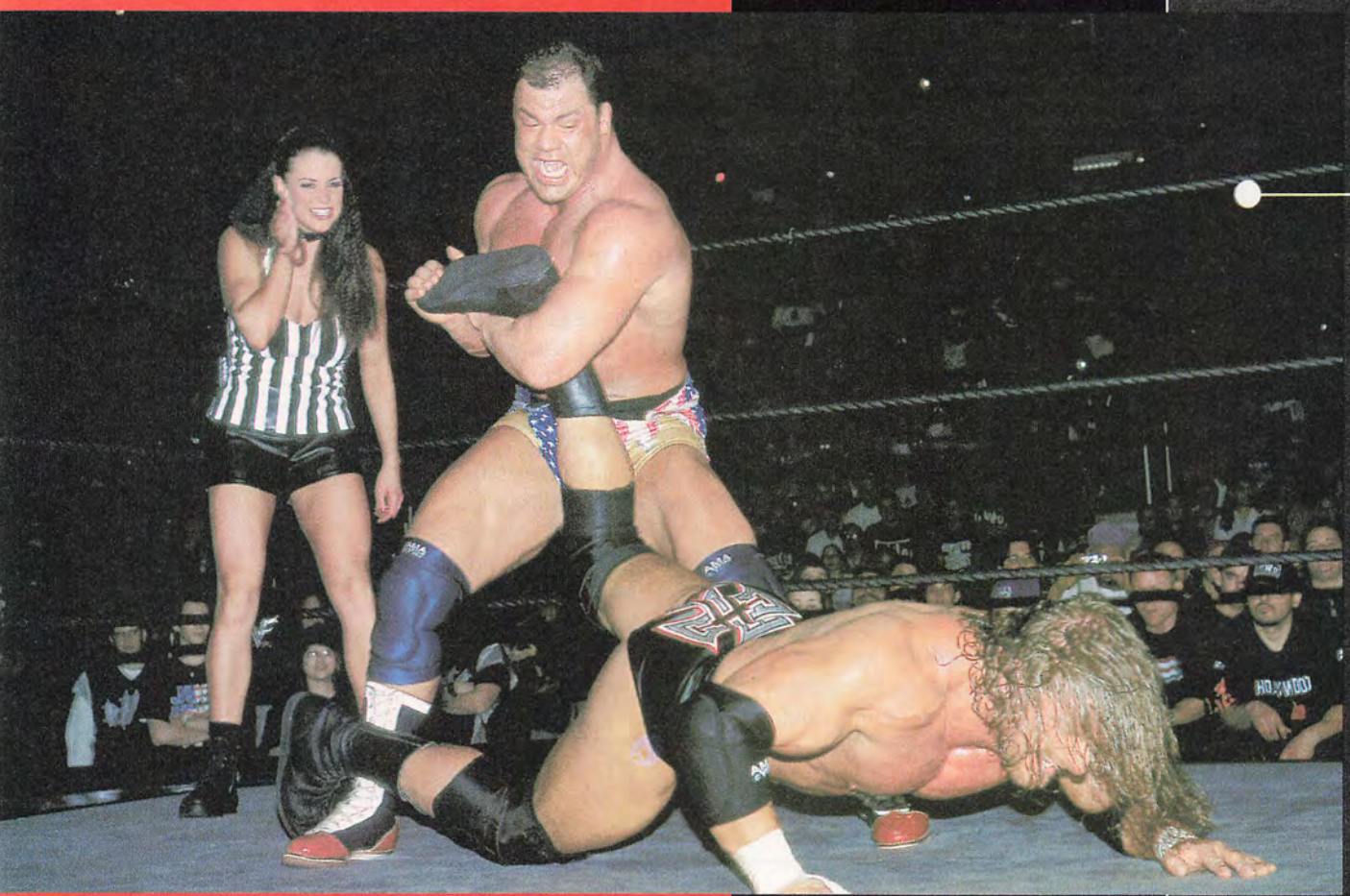

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Triple-H & Stephanie
by Gary Dineen
Scott Hall & Hulk Hogan
by Gary Dineen

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Greg Stevens

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before the bell

Compiled by Will Welsh

WHATTA PR STAFF!

It's hard to believe that it's been almost a full year since we've seen Chyna on WWF programming. She had been such an integral part of the Federation for so long that it didn't seem right when she parted ways with the WWF with nary a goodbye. One minute she was in a feud with Lita and the next she was gone. Suddenly, big and powerful Chyna had become little-known Joanie Laurer, an aspiring actress and model. And considering that Hollywood hasn't been kind to former professional wrestlers not named "Rowdy" Roddy Piper, we weren't sure when we'd see the two-time former Intercontinental champion again.

To be honest, we weren't sure *if* we'd ever see her again at all.

We couldn't have been more wrong. Since leaving the WWF, Joanie has been an *Entertainment Tonight* staple, possibly garnering more mainstream press than she ever would have had she remained in the WWF! Let's just take a quick look at her post-WWF resume:

a. Appeared on MTV's *Cribs* program, where she took us around the home that Chyna built. It was surprisingly quaint. Where were the whips and chains?

b. Hosted New York City's Exotic Erotic Ball. Guess where the whips and chains finally popped up!

c. Appeared on NBC's *Fear Factor* alongside Coolio, Kelly Preston, David Hasselhoff, Brooke Burns, and Donny Osmond. Joanie rode on the top of a bus, shared a small Plexiglas box with superworms, millipedes, and 20 Emperor scorpions, and tried to walk across a swinging steel circle that was suspended 100 feet in the air. So scary! Did we mention that she also appeared on the same show as Hasselhoff and Osmond? That's pretty damn frightening even without having to perform the rest of those ridiculous stunts.

d. Made her second appearance on the cover of *Playboy,* this time dressed as a "warrior princess." Even though this issue was not promoted ad nauseum on WWF TV, it became one of *Playboy's* all-time best sellers. *Playboy* followed up with a video entitled *Joanie Laurer Nude: Wrestling Superstar,* making *PWI* editors hearken back to the long-lost days of apartment wrestling. (Where are those negatives anyway?)

e. Guest-starred on the WB sitcom *Sabrina The Teenage Witch.*

f. Slammed the runway as a model for Lane Bryant's Spring 2002 fashion show. In an interview with *Entertainment Tonight* Online, Joanie had this to say about the show: "My M.O. is to mix strength, beauty, and intelligence and to show everyone what the average woman out there looks like!" Did she say average? When did Joanie ever consider herself average?

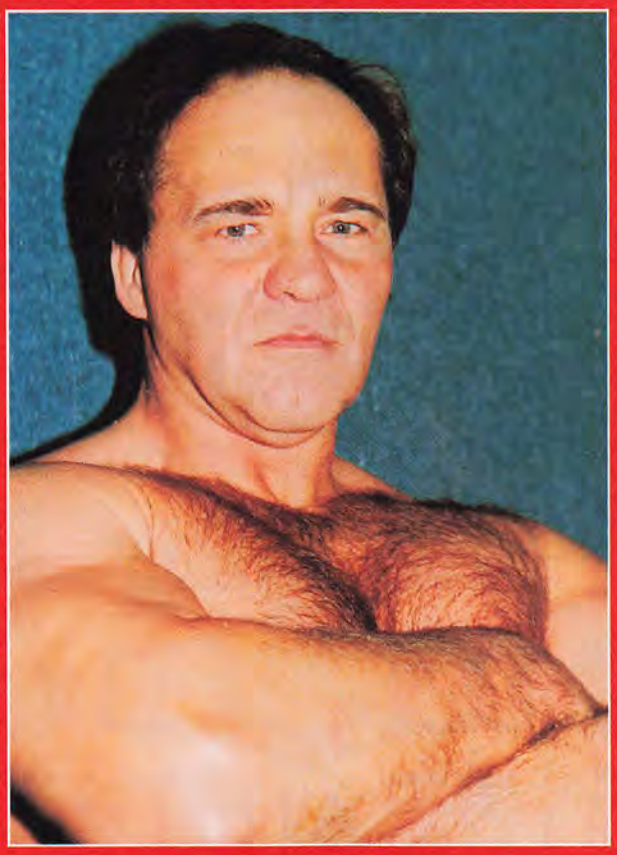
Believe us when we tell you these are only the *highlights* of Joanie's post-WWF career. We visited her Web site and perused the list of *everything* she's done and all the special appearances she's made and were amazed.

Given the lack of careers of some other former WWF divas in recent years (Rena who?), we have to applaud Joanie. Not only is she still everyone's favorite Amazon, she is in some ways a bigger star now than when she was in the WWF. That's gotta be deserving of five suplexes, right?

THE STUPID FILES

When promoter Andrew McManus opened WWA: The Revolution, the promotion's first-ever live North American pay-per-view, we weren't sure what to expect. We certainly weren't expecting an apology, but that's exactly what we got.

"Macho Man" Randy Savage, who had been featured prominently in advertising for the show, pulled out of the pay-per-view at the last minute. McManus put on a brave face and did his best public relations work to smooth things over.



His apology was heartfelt and sincere, but it was also ugly. If this on-air appearance was any indication, video cameras and the WWA promoter do not get along. But the guy tried. And it least it got the night's worst microphone work out of the way very early.

Or so we thought until former WCW commentator Larry Zbyszko grabbed a mike in the show's last hour. The ensuing promo was the night's worst segment by far. Even worse than the Kronic vs. Native Blood bout. Worse than the midget hardcore match. Worse than everything else on the show. (By the way, you can read a complete report on the show next month in *PWI.*)

It's not that Zbyszko is a bad talker. He was one of the best of his generation. But with a few minor exceptions, his generation is no longer vital, and Zbyszko came across as damn bitter about that.

At the WWA pay-per-view, Zbyszko let his anger flow unchecked. He badmouthed Vince McMahon Jr., saying that he loved working for Vince McMahon *Sr.* and that the elder McMahon wouldn't let Vince Jr. become a wrestler because he thought his son couldn't handle it. He also challenged McMahon to a fight (to be held at the next WWA pay-per-view, of course) and made a point to say that he had never worked for McMahon and that he never would.

Right after that, however, it sure looked like he was attempting to put himself into a program with Chris Jericho, the undisputed WWF champion. He called Jericho too short and seemed so gosh-darn mad that Y2J would dare call himself the "Living Legend."

For a man who doesn't want to work for the WWF anymore, he sure did a good job of giving the WWF face time on a competitor's program. Just what the WWA needed.

Our advice to Larry: Next time he wants to make a splash, he should challenge someone who might actually accept it.

Screech from *Saved By The Bell* is wrestling now, isn't he?

It's no secret that Scott Hall has had his problems over the years. Battles with alcohol and drugs have kept him away from the sport more often then he'd like. When he signed with the WWF to be a part of the NWO, Hall claimed that he had finally kicked his addictions for good. At least he hoped he had. And if he was tempted, he couldn't do anything anyway because combined with prescription medication he is taking, he would become severely ill.

"It's a medication you take, and if you abuse any alcohol at all—even mouthwash or cologne—it will make you violently ill, and one of the side effects is death, in some instances," said Hall in an interview with wwf.com.

If that's truly the case, why is the WWF constantly putting Hall in storylines that include alcohol? Wouldn't the beer that "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin poured on Hall during their feud qualify as some kind of extremely dangerous hazard?

Finally, a quick question for WWF referee Tim White: The name of your Rhode Island bar is the Friendly Tap, yet every time the WWF is in town, full-scale brawls, complete with broken pool sticks and bar stools, break out. Have you thought about changing the name? It doesn't seem so friendly to us!

WE HEARD THAT!

"The debut [WCW match on WWF TV] was terrible. I was out there with one guy [Buff Bagwell] that wasn't willing to put in the time and effort to give a good performance."

—Booker T, in an interview with the *Dallas Morning News*

"I will be cordial and do business with [Hulk Hogan, Scott Hall, and Kevin Nash]. On a personal level, a lot of things that happened to me in WCW, they were directly responsible for. But I'm going to wait and see how they react."

—Chris Jericho, in an interview with wrestlingobserver.com

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"The really cool thing is, everybody here in the Federation family—guys I didn't know, guys I thought I had heat with that might not like me—has been so kind to me and so nice. They put me on an ego trip."

—Hulk Hogan, in an interview with wwf.com

"I felt stupid screaming in the ring, but the gimmick gave me a chance to cross over because I was already a wrestler. I became more noticed when that gimmick was started."

—Norman Smiley, recalling his days as WCW's hardcore champion in an interview with Slam! Wrestling

"I wish NBC and arena football my best."

—Vince McMahon, in a *Los Angeles Times* story reporting NBC's deal to air Arena League games

caption me!

Think you're a better writer than the editors here at *PWI?* Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This picture of a pre-Faarooq Ron Simmons preparing for the arrival of Santa needs a short, concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you're up to the task, e-mail your zany quips to PWIFocus@aol.com or slap a 34-cent stamp on an envelope and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!" Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three months from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better.

APRIL'S BEST

"I cannot *believe* I forgot the words to 'O, Canada.'"

—Robert Payes, Parsippany, NJ

"Okay, okay, I'll talk to someone about the intro music. Sheesh, you hear it twice a week. Try every night!"

—Tom Strickland, strickla@wasp.navy.mil

"First Edge and I break up. Now they got me in OVW wrestling 'Cowboy' Bob Orton's kid!"

—Rammy David, bigrams@hotmail.com

"Too many chair shots, but at least it's better than Rikishi's stinkface. Gangrel, where are you?"

—badboy4life48322@yahoo.com

"Oh, I forgot to turn the curling iron off. Edge is gonna kill me for this one!"

—MichaelGreenslade, mikeyg_62664@hotmail.com

"Oh, no, not only have I wet myself in front of all these people, but I've started another interview without the microphone!"

—xavier_school@yahoo.com

"Uh … let's see … you weigh 150 pounds … your birthday is in May …"

—briank@intelos.net

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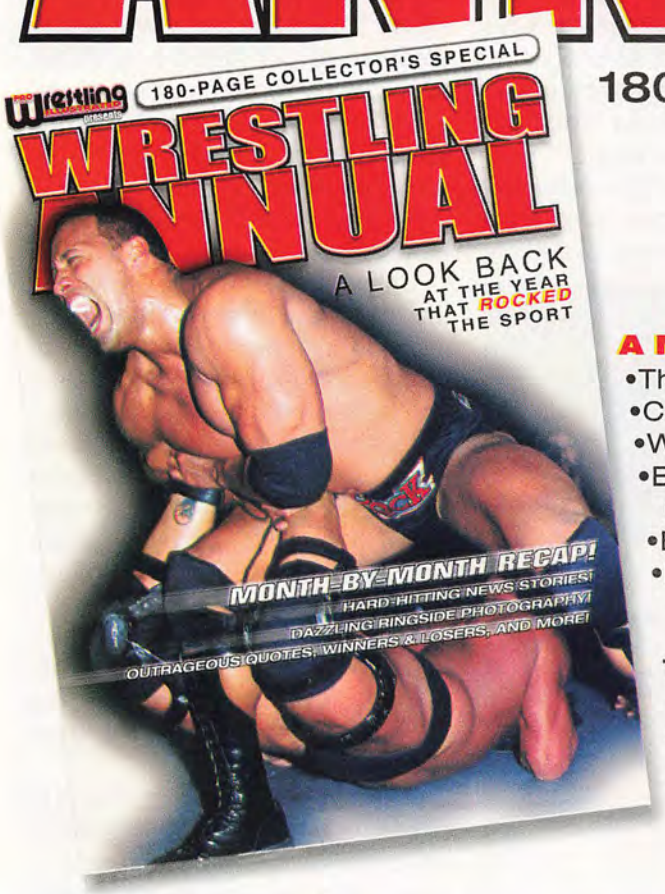
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ringside

With Will Welsh

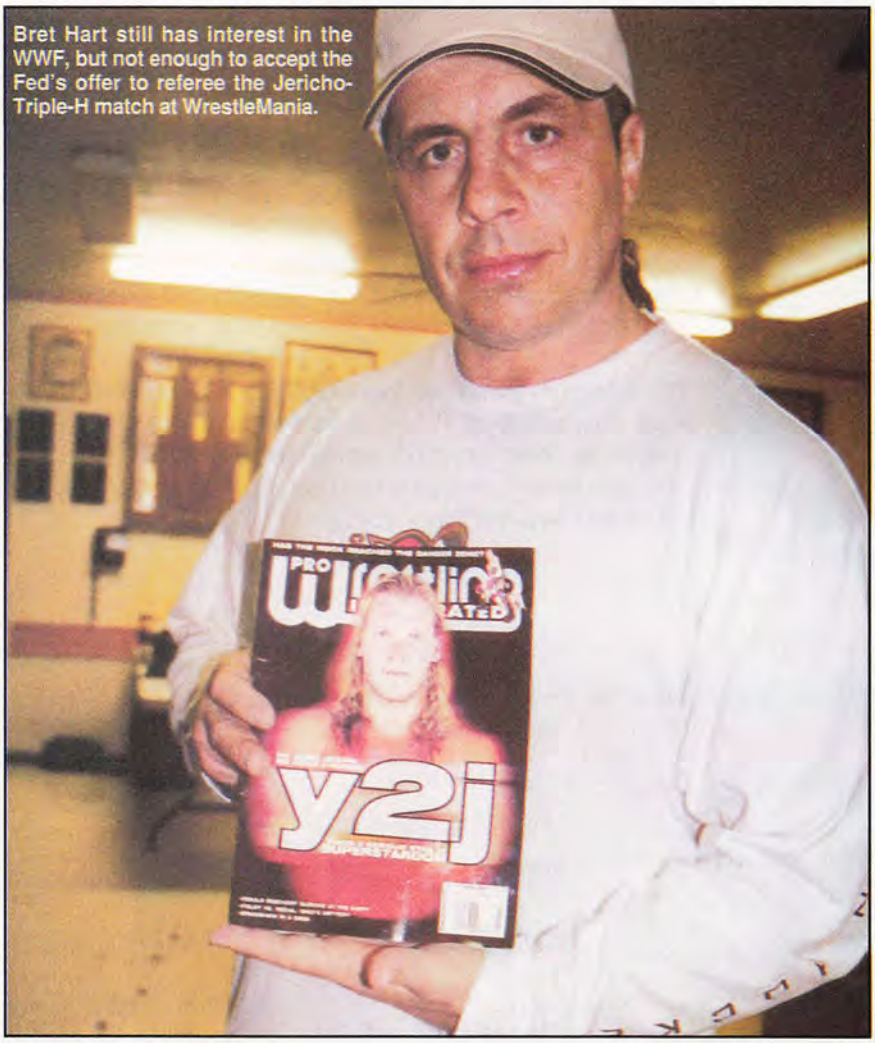
LESS THAN A month before WrestleMania X-8, **Bret Hart** received a call from the WWF. Federation officials wanted to know if he was interested in refereeing the main event between undisputed WWF champion **Chris Jericho** and **Triple-H**.

Shockingly, Hart considered the offer.

When it looked like Bret was going to back away without accepting, the WWF went one step further: It offered him the chance to confront **Vince McMahon** and perhaps kayo in the ring in an act of retribution.

"In that one phony punch, everything that's happened would be minimized into an angle," Hart wrote in his weekly "Sharpshooter" column for the *Calgary Sun*. "Maybe wrestling fans would love it. My fans would hate it. And so would I.

"Thanks, but no thanks."



Bret Hart still has interest in the WWF, but not enough to accept the Fed's offer to referee the Jericho-Triple-H match at WrestleMania.

Of course, this latest episode begs the question of why Bret would even consider a return to the WWF. The bitterness surrounding the 1997 Survivor Series finish still eats at him, as does his brother **Owen**'s 1999 death at the Over the Edge pay-per-view. For nearly five years, there has been no joy between the WWF and Bret Hart, yet Bret actually considered returning to the Fed—if only for a night.

Why?

Well, according to Bret, he's working on an autobiography and would also like to put together a video anthology of his illustrious career. In order to make the autobiography special, and to make the video anthology at all, Bret needs access to photographs and videos that were taken throughout his career.

Unfortunately for him, the WWF owns just about every photo and every piece of film on the guy dating back something like 16 years. Bret can't even petition WCW to use photos and videos from his time there, because the WWF now owns that stuff, too! The WWF pretty much has a monopoly on Bret Hart's history, and there's not much Bret can do about it.

Had he appeared at WrestleMania, however, Hart says that Federation officials were willing to offer him use of those items. Bret declined anyway.

"I listened to the offer but found it offensive the WWF would expect me to so easily dismiss everything that's happened and parade myself out there giving the impression to the world that our differences have been worked out," Hart wrote in his *Calgary Sun* column. "Montreal. Owen. The manipulated divide-and-conquer derision of the Hart family, showing no respect to my father or even my poor mother, who died without seeing any resolution to it. Why would I minimize any of that?"

Bret did leave a door open for a possible resolution, though. If McMahon is willing to pick up the

The rumors about Eric Bischoff joining the WWF version of the NWO are still out there, and those rumors might yet turn into reality. If they don't, Bischoff is likely to remain very busy developing a new reality-based martial arts show with Survivor producer Mark Burnett.

phone and call him, Hart will talk. A conversation might not solve anything, but at least it would be a start.

Who knows, maybe we'll see Bret Hart in a WWF ring somewhere down the line after all.

Eric Bischoff update: The former WCW president has been able to keep his nose in the business much longer than a lot of ex-wrestling executives. Rumors still persist that he's headed to the WWF as part of the NWO angle. But now that he's hooked up with *Survivor* producer **Mark Burnett** and shopping around a martial arts-based reality show, the WWF might no longer be a priority.

"There was nobody better for us to join up with to bring martial arts to a mainstream audience than Mark," Bischoff told *Daily Variety*. "The show is all about the stories [of the athletes], and if you look at everything Mark does, it all comes down to the personalities, the characters, and the situations people are put into."

If *Tough Enough* is a success, I can't see why this concept—if presented correctly—wouldn't have a chance of working. It sure sounds interesting.

NWA Southwest promoter **Ken Taylor** is making sure that NWA Southwest fans remain NWA Southwest fans. Instead of allowing NWA Southwest Texas tag team champions **Black Attack** to hold on to the title while **Mike Anthony**, co-holder of the championship, sat out injured, Taylor told Anthony's partner, **Al Jackson**, to pick a new partner and defend the title against **J.P. Black** and **Mike Thunder**. If Jackson had refused, Taylor would have stripped Black Attack of the title and held a tournament to fill the vacancy.

Predictably, Jackson acquiesced and named **Hellraiser Hark** as his partner. Black and Thunder took advantage of the makeshift team and captured the title. Not too long after, **The Blackbird Posse**, **Larry Green** and **Chris Young**, defeated Black and Thunder to become the new champs.

Kudos to Taylor for doing right by Texas fans and keeping the NWA Southwest tag team title scene interesting.

In news that I report way too often for my own liking, the wrestling community suffered two more losses since last issue. **Nelson Royal**, who reached the pinnacle of his career in the late-1970s by winning the NWA junior heavyweight title, died at the age of 70 on February 3 in North Carolina after suffering a massive heart attack. And **Swede Hanson**, who won various regional titles with tag team partner **Rip Hawk**, died of Alzheimer's Disease on February 19 in South Carolina. Hanson was 68.

"He was a super guy," **Dory Funk Jr.** said of Royal in an interview with the *Wrestling Observer*. "He was a terrific worker. By today's standards, he would have been a great worker because he was all action, had timing, and took excellent bumps. He made me think I was terrific. When I wrestled other people, I found out that I wasn't as good as I thought. I wish everybody in the business was like him."

Here's wishing a speedy recovery to WCWO's **Indiana Kidd Jr.**, who recently suffered a leg injury ... Heard very good things about the debut of the Rings of Honor promo-

(Continued on page 64)

Even after he retired from wrestling, Nelson Royal stayed very active. He ran a wrestling school in North Carolina for a while. Sadly, the former NWA junior heavyweight champion died of a heart attack at the age of 70 in February.

in focus

By Dave Lenker

THE OTHER *TOUGH ENOUGH* WINNER

The match description I read told me it was a hard-fought, fairly even match, but Nidia's one-sentence summary of the first match of her pro career—a barely publicized bout with fellow Ohio Valley Wrestling diva Victoria in a tiny building in Indianapolis—was a lot more interesting:

"I got my ass handed to me."

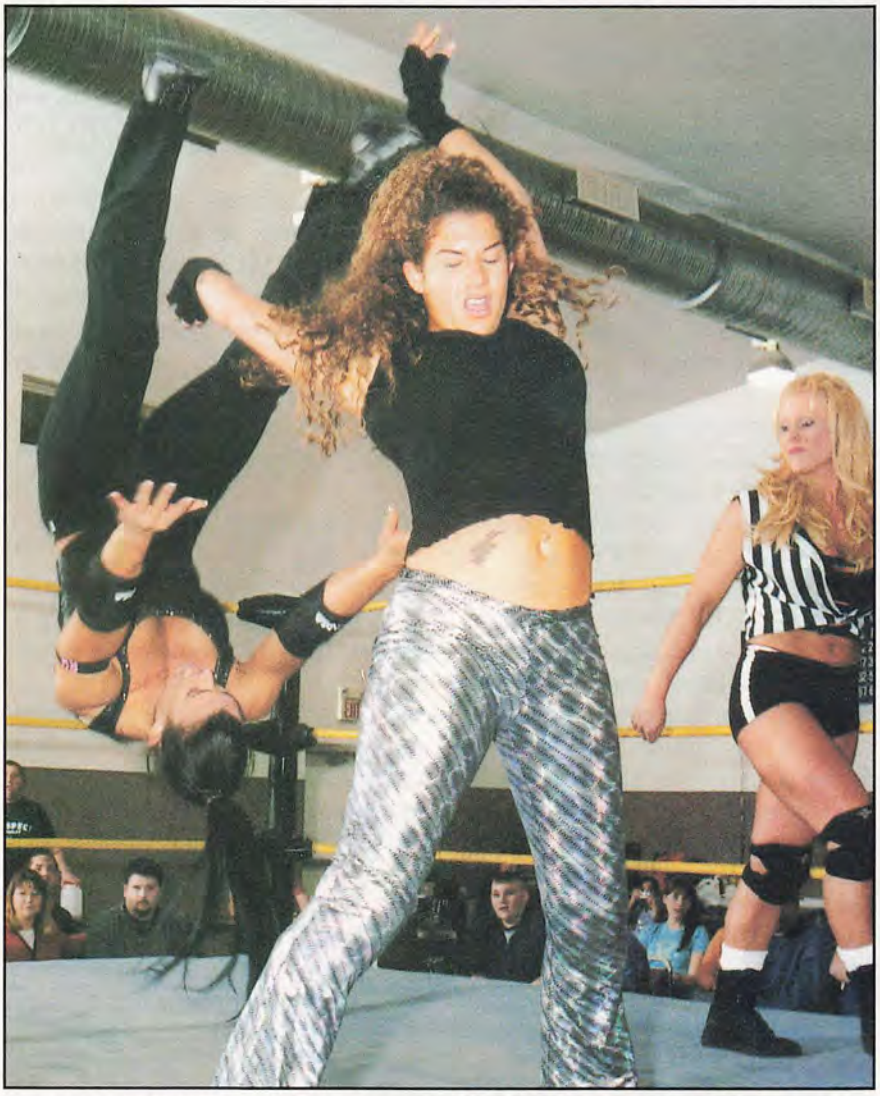
The female winner of the first *Tough Enough* couldn't help but laugh as she described to me the day of that first match. Her memories, quite frankly, aren't all that vivid. A nasty stomach virus was to blame for that. What she does remember is that on the very day on which she was finally going to show everybody that she was ready to perform in front of a live crowd, Nidia was feeling crampy, tired, and nauseous. How's that for luck?

"I was really, really sick, but you think about someone like Triple-H wrestling with a torn quad and you have to go out there and do it," she said. So sickness be damned, she *did* go out there and do it. She did it with a smile on her face and a fairly small but very enthusiastic OVW crowd behind her. She took suplexes, handspring elbows, a spear, an elbow to the face, kicks, and a neckbreaker, among other moves. Truth be told, she got in her fair share of offense.

The experience turned out to be a bit less harrowing than her *Tough Enough* audition. Thanks to that stomach virus, nerves weren't that much of a problem, and doing a live match was certainly more fun than training (good luck finding an athlete who doesn't share that opinion). "Being as sick as I was, the nervousness was secondary," she recalled. "I just wanted to get it done and get right to bed. But it was easier than I thought it would be."

A lot of the credit for that goes to all those in OVW who worked so hard for two months to help Nidia get ready for that first match. Former OVW Southern tag team champion Rob Conway watched her match closely—he even shouted out, "Yeah ... yeah!" when she did something particularly well, she found out later—and was full of praise for her when she returned to the dressing room once Victoria finished her off with a powerslam and moonsault.

"Everyone in the back was just so supportive," she said. "Even the guys from the Heartland Wrestling Association who were there asked for a tape of the match. They said

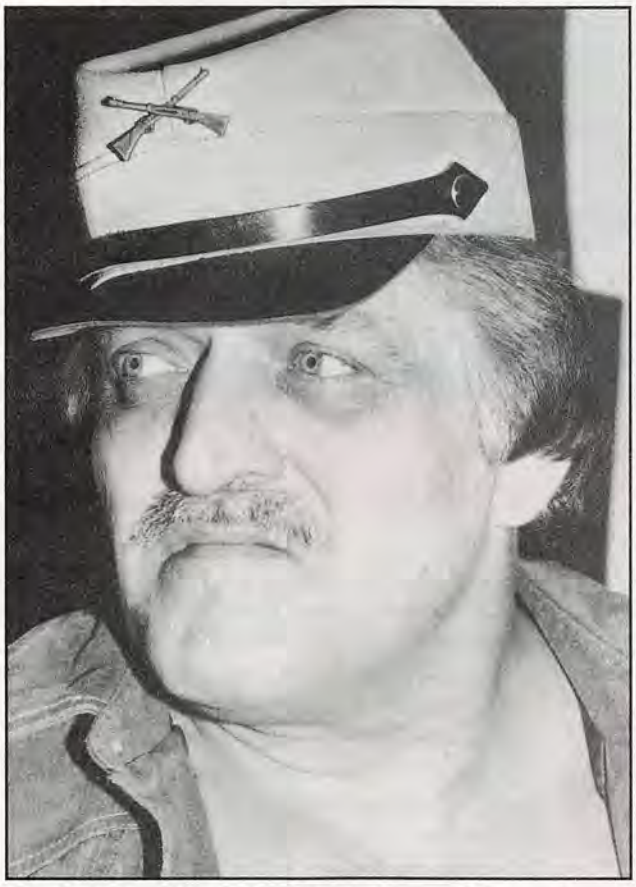


***Tough Enough* winner Nidia didn't beat Victoria in her first pro match, but she did put up a good fight and wrestle a good match. It wasn't easy considering she was suffering from a stomach virus.**

they wanted to show the girls there the tape so they could see how it was done."

I asked her to rate her performance on a scale of one to 10. After much deliberation, and keeping in mind it was her first match, she gave herself an eight. As she gains more experience, I suspect she'll be more and more critical of herself. In the meantime, if she ever gets frustrated or has even a little trouble motivating herself to get out of bed and head off to "practice" or to do her weight training, all she has to do is pop a tape of her good friend (and fellow *Tough Enough* winner) Maven in her VCR and watch him nearly beating Chris Jericho for the WWF title and getting *his* ass handed to him by The Undertaker.

"Seeing what he's done just makes me hungrier and want to work harder," she said. "I know that's where I want to be someday."



One look at a 1983 photo of Swede Hanson tells you he was hardly the best-looking wrestler of any era. Dave Lenker doesn't remember him as a great wrestler, either. Yet he'll always have some fond memories of the man billed from Slaughter Creek, North Carolina.

THE BIG SWEDE

There is no Slaughter Creek, North Carolina, at least not according to the tattered road atlas that sits atop my desk. Maybe it's just too small to make an atlas. I've been to North Carolina a few times, and I can't recall ever seeing signs for it.

Slaughter Creek is what comes to mind when I hear the name Swede Hanson. That was his hometown when he was wrestling for the WWF toward the end of his career. That's what ring announcer Joe McHugh told us anyway. Sadly, the name Swede Hanson made news for the worst possible reason this winter, as the big man died at the age of 68. He had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and various other serious ailments prior to his death.

I'll admit that my memories of Swede Hanson in the ring are fuzzy at best. I started following wrestling in 1982—at the age of 13—and Hanson was one of those guys I grew to love watching for reasons I could never pinpoint. He was about as slow as a wrestler (even a 300-pounder) could be. He was ugly. He looked like he hadn't slept in months (why else would he have such deep, dark circles under his eyes?). He couldn't do a good interview (he must have done *some* talking, but I can't remember any of it). His matches weren't captivating. And his finisher, an across-the-knee backbreaker, was weak, even by early-1980s standards.

But my friends and I grew to love watching the guy we called the big Swede.

He was my first guilty pleasure in wrestling, my Big Bossman of 20 years ago.

Maybe it was the grunting he did, or the fact that crowds learned to mimic him after a while. Or that distant, blank, yet menacing stare that would come over his face as he made a fist and extended it toward the camera while "celebrating" a victory.

He was the first heel I ever saw turned into a fan favorite by fan reaction alone. Apparently I was not the only one who found cheering the big Swede to be a lot of fun. There was no grand plan concocted by anyone in the WWF to turn him. The turn was a slow one, and after resisting it for a while, I suppose the Fed just decided to let it happen. I recall him getting into a big argument with the Magnificent Muraco at the old Philadelphia Spectrum one night and, as guest referee of Muraco's match, deliberately costing him a win. The live crowd loved it. And I loved it.

A month or so later, Muraco, as the bigger star, got his revenge on Hanson. I don't have any memories of other big Swede Hanson matches or feuds, and I suppose I forgot about him once he left the WWF. It wasn't until after his death that I found out just how accomplished he was as a tag team wrestler with partner Rip Hawk and that he wrestled Bob Backlund for the WWF title in front of 20,000 fans at Madison Square Garden on one night in 1979. Honestly, it wouldn't have mattered to me if I found out he never won a significant match in his life.

The next time I'm in North Carolina, I'm going to find out for sure if Slaughter Creek really exists. If it does, I gotta see it.

*(Have a comment or question about "In Focus" or anything else you see in **PWI**? You can contact Dave Lenker via e-mail at PWIFocus@aol.com.)* □

off the top rope

By Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:
TOP ROPE Box 1148 Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or send e-mail to: **offthetoprope@yahoo.com**

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

WHY IS IT that only idiots write letters to me? Where are all of the intelligent wrestling fans? Oh, wait, that's an oxymoron. In reality, intelligent fans don't exist. There are only fans who think they are because they know Hayabusa's real name. Just remember my theory, kids: A mark is a mark is a mark. I see all of you so-called smart fans, clapping furiously for guys like Donovan Morgan while barking about his latest Pro Wrestling NOAH bouts. You boast of having the latest tapes of him and knowing all about his upcoming schedule. You're the same ones secretly marking out for Mr. Ooh La La's bumbling entrance. I bet you all didn't think I noticed things like that, did you?

What this all proves is that, deep down, we are all marks. Despite what you think you know about the inner workings of the sport, there's always something else happening on a deeper level. No matter how inside you think you are in this business, you're always one step behind the real insiders. A true insider never reveals all of his knowledge.

Don't worry, blackhearts, for those of you who wish to walk on the evil side of the "in" crowd, I will always be your torch-bearing champion lighting the way through the inner workings of the sport.

Brandi,

I'm a huge fan of the WWF, and was excited about the contest that they put on called *Tough Enough*. I watched the first series and thought it was a real good inside look at the business and how they choose the talent. Although in the new season, I got a little inside peek at the program and thought, *Were all the contestants really getting a fair shot?* Example: There was a young man who I would agree was a bit on the hefty side and did an okay job, but was ruled out before he ever really got a shot because of his weight. Jim Ross was quoted as saying, "You can't have a body that looks like you had a litter of pups." I thought everything was supposed to be fair. Obviously not. But, taking a contestant's weight into consideration, why do they still employ such talent as Rikishi and The Big Show? Both, for their size, are grossly overweight, but still kept on. Why? And for those keeping score, Jim Ross should be the last person telling someone to hit the gym. I'd dare him to step foot in one. I know the world is based on looks, but to be that shallow all the time and not give someone who may be a great athlete a shot seems sort of unfair … well, they did give X-Pac his shot, so I guess it's even. Of course, that's my opinion. I could be wrong.

JUSTIN SANE
Team_Vandam@yahoo.com

Jim Ross deserves every wrestling fan's respect. He does more for the WWF than anyone else not named McMahon. I think the next time any of you attend a live *Raw*, you all should ask to kiss his feet and thank him for being him.

Dear Justin,

Were we watching the same program? There's a big difference between large wrestlers like Rikishi and Big Show and this wannabe porker who couldn't even pass the agility test. It's called skill. That fat, litter-nursing kid could barely muster enough strength to hoist his lard ass over the two blocking dummies that every contestant had to jump over. The WWF and MTV have every right to be picky with the contestants. Both companies want to show beautiful people—or at least people with charisma or something about them that would make viewers at home root for that person. If they wanted ugly people filling the *TE2* roster, I'm sure they would have picked you. Yes, good looks do help get you far in this world, but if there's nothing else to bolster those good looks, you'll quickly lose your status. Take me, for instance. Not only am I beautiful, but I am also highly intelligent and very talented at my chosen craft. My looks might help me get my foot in many doors, but it's my mind and my insight that keep the door unlocked for future entrances.

As far as Jim Ross in concerned, your comments are highly unfair. Jim Ross has done more for this business than anyone in recent years. Sure, he

probably doesn't go to the gym often, but his work schedule would kill most normal, athletic people. Ross is the heart of the WWF, whether or not you care to recognize him as such.

Dear Brandi:

I am curious to know if you know Bret Hart's mailing or P.O. Box address. And how do I get a subscription to the *Calgary Sun?* Is there an address you can give me to write them? Please help me … and do you know the mailing or P.O. Box of Jeff Hardy? Same with Shane Helms, Kevin Nash, Rob Van Dam, and Val Venis!? One more question: Do you have a list of wrestling schools and addresses that you could send me? I really want to get into wrestling; it is my ultimate goal in life. Please let me know as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
ROSE MAIER
Everett, WA

Dear Readers,

If there's one thing I refuse to do, it's helping you freaks stalk your favorite wrestlers by giving you their addresses. I'm also not going to pass any messages along to your prey of the month. It'd be more helpful if I were to pass your names and addresses on to the police so they'd know your name when they find you sitting on Jeff Hardy's lawn and waiting for him to come out of his house. Another thing: It's scary people like you who should never get close to a wrestling ring, let alone in one. So, no, you're not getting any addresses of wrestling schools, either.

Jeff Hardy should be thanking me for not giving scary fans his address. Otherwise, he'd be crawling away from them as they tackled him when he went outside to get his mail.

Dear Brandi,

I am writing to you in regard to a letter you received and a response that you gave. I have been a fan of the WWF for as long as I can remember. I can't say I was a loyal fan, because I did watch NWA/WCW and ECW when they were around. I wish that the Alliance did get their own show or one of the independent promotions did get a boost. The WWF is all about the storylines. Yes, I'll admit WCW wasn't all that great, but it was a change. It was about the wrestlers, not the crowds or the owners. I truly enjoyed ECW because those guys were true athletes. Yeah, they might have been nobodies and not superstars, but they had something not many of the WWF superstars had: heart and desire. To be honest with you, I would pick ECW over the WWF any day. All Vince worried about was being number one in the world of wrestling, and now he is, and he's paying for it. Ratings are dropping and fans are getting bored with it, so if this is what you get for being number one, well, Vince, you can have it. I was a diehard wrestling fan. I would go to wrestling every month from April '89 to when they closed the Gardens in September 1995. Now you're lucky if I can even stay awake for *Raw*—never mind *Smackdown.*

Jason R.
JJunior316@aol.com

Dear Jason,

Here's a little tip: Professional wrestling has always been based on storylines. Some promotions, like ECW, have showcased more athletic contests than others, but they are all now pretty much defunct. Remember, though, ECW had its share of bad storylines as well, like the triangle between Raven, Tommy Dreamer, and Beulah McGillicutty that supposedly began in grade school. The only reason it went over so well is because Paul Heyman is a master of smoke and mirrors. Every ECW fan was duped into thinking that Heyman was a master and ECW was the mecca of wrestling. Now it's gone.

Letter of the month (taken verbatim from the actual letter to share my torture with you all):

Dear Brandi

I wanted to know how can I be a color commentator or a referee or a interviewer like michael cole and the coach do you know where I can go to try out do you need a college degree to be either one of them please brandi tell me what I have to do or where to go to accomplish it. If you can't answer in the PWI My email is LuisOcasio19@hotmail.com

Luis Ocasio

Luis,

First, it would help if you could improve your writing skills. Since you lack the knowledge to pen a decent letter, a more practical approach is needed. I suggest turning down the volume on your TV when you're watching *Raw* and making up your own commentary. Once you think you're good at it, make a videotape of yourself interviewing family members about their "upcoming matches." Plop that tape into an envelope and send it to the talent development department of the WWF and I'm sure they'll get back to you in a few years. Whatever you do, just don't let them know that I had anything to do with it. □

krew-cuts

By Frank Krewda

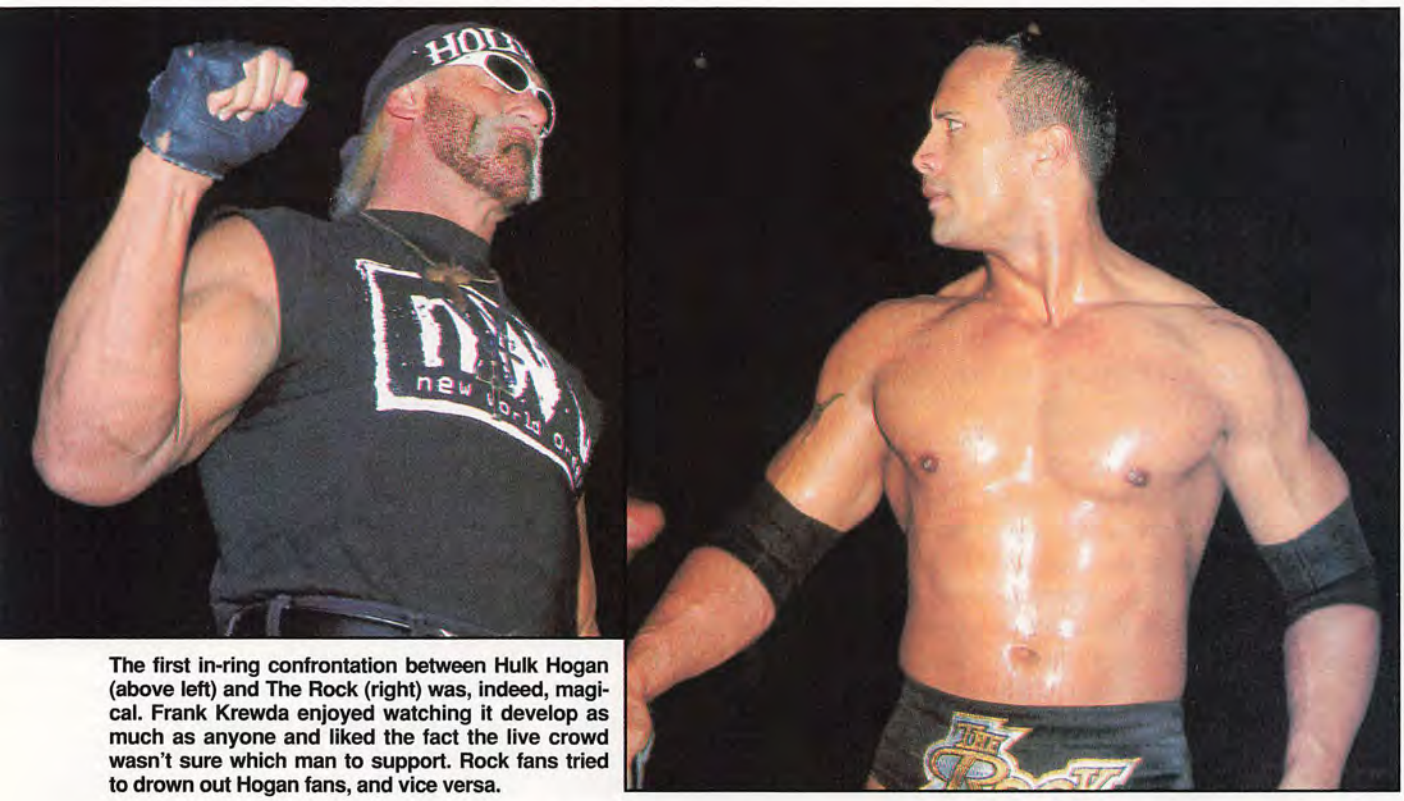
NWO notes. While Scott Hall, Hulk Hogan, and Kevin Nash's "just give us a chance" shtick was transparent from the first syllable, I urge WWF fans to buck the trend of running down these three for their political manipulation and just concentrate on what happens in the ring.

Take, for example, the Rock-Hogan confrontation on *Raw* on the night after No Way Out. That segment was the most compelling TV I've seen from the Fed since the ECW invasion angle. Ironically, the confrontation went over so well not because The Rock was spewing sardonic one-liners, but mainly because the fans (at least a very vocal minority of them) were into Hollywood. In a radical departure from most WCW-WWF encounters, the new hire came off looking as good as, if not better than the roster member.

Naturally, Rock is younger and fresher than Hogan, but I thought it somewhat presumptuous for The Rock to declare that wrestling fans were dreaming of the day he and Hogan would wrestle each other. I'd bet most fans would consider Steve Austin vs. Bill Goldberg to be the real dream match, especially since it'll probably never happen.

In another departure, I must admit watching Hall actually perform in his segments with Austin feels strange. Hall and Nash spent so much time in WCW just hanging out and acting cool that it's hard to accept them in a specific role. Something tells me the NWO will see its fair share of down roles in the WWF.

WWF notes. The reason Curt Hennig is having so much trouble catching on as a singles star in the WWF (and why I think he's most likely to become the NWO's first recruit) is not because he hasn't changed his look since 1988. And it's not because the WWF is crowded with younger, faster athletes. It's because he keeps missing that damned gum whenever he spits it out. I'm a Hennig fan, but I don't want Jim Ross telling me Mr. Perfect is a technician when the man can't even slap away a wad of gum falling six inches from his face ... Call me a cynic, but I really have to wonder how many WWF wrestlers truly endorse Stacker 2. Just look at the stars who have hawked this stuff recently: Tazz, who's probably gained a little weight since joining



The first in-ring confrontation between Hulk Hogan (above left) and The Rock (right) was, indeed, magical. Frank Krewda enjoyed watching it develop as much as anyone and liked the fact the live crowd wasn't sure which man to support. Rock fans tried to drown out Hogan fans, and vice versa.

the WWF, and The Big Show, who's been in the doghouse for more than a year because he can't keep his weight down and keeps seeing his role reduced ... Staying on the subject of doghouses, Christian is apparently in somebody's. Why else would WWF bookers pin him to Dallas Page, who hasn't found a decent character in the WWF yet? Christian was relatively hot, riding his tantrum program to decent crowd heat. Then Page flashed that phony smile. That was a bad thing, a very bad thing ... In other annoying storyline, the "What?!" phenomenon continues sinking to new lows. At No Way Out, fans in attendance chanted "What?!" whenever Austin executed a maneuver on undisputed World champion Chris Jericho. Could it get any worse than that? You bet. Fans in Las Vegas for the World Wrestling All-Stars pay-per-view on February 24 actually chanted "What?!" at Eddie Guerrero during a postmatch promo. This can't be the next big idea wrestling needs so badly.

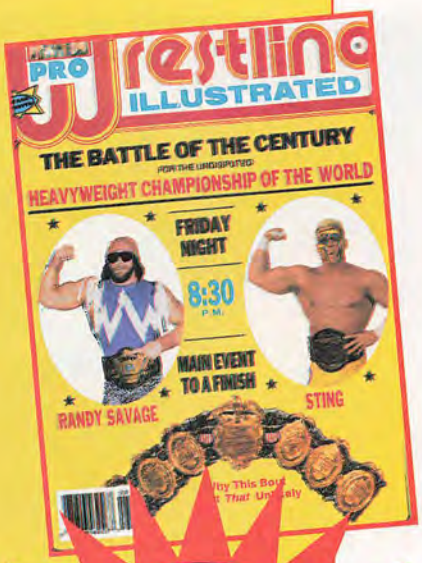
The WWA's first U.S. pay-per-view started off strong, according to Krewda, as Nova (shown applying a headlock on Chris Daniels) won an exciting six-way cruiserweight elimination match. It was tough for other wrestlers to top that, especially those who followed immediately afterward.

WWA notes. I know the WWA has no plans to run against the WWF on Monday nights. I'm not even sure it's trying to get a regular TV show at all. But if this outfit hopes to attract American viewers for future cards in this country, it had better do the following right away:

1. Kidnap Vince McMahon and force him to map out the card. Sounds silly, but if you saw the Revolution pay-per-view, I'm sure you'd agree. There was no logical progression to the lineup. Even worse: There was no logical progression to most of the matches. In fact, lots of matches had no real beginning and no real end. They just sort of started up, then fizzled into chaos. The biggest mistake of the night was opening with a killer cruiserweight match that featured Christopher Daniels, Low-Ki, Nova, Shark Boy, A.J. Styles, and Tony Mamaluke, then following it up with Alan Funk vs. Reno. I guess the thinking was the fans would be into the match since Reno is from Nevada. Unfortunately, they were into Funk's Hulk Hogan imitation much more—and for good reason. Funk does a better Hogan than Terry Bollea. The following bout? A midget hardcore match.

2. Get a new ring. So how small was the WWA ring? It was so small that most camera angles captured all four sides in every frame, which gave the promotion an amateurish feel. And while the WWA is at it, it might consider finding an arena in which it can put seats on all four sides of the squared circle. The "stage" ring left two sides bereft of people, subduing what little fan reaction actually occurred. Plus, the poor lighting around the ring made the action tough to see at times.

3. Hire new announcers. Want to see how poor announcers can make a bad show worse? Purchase the next WWA PPV and you'll find out. I can't really fault Jeremy Borash, who struggled to complete a mistake-free sentence all night. He's simply miscast as a blow-by-blow man. Mark Madden, however, does have experience as color commentator. The problem is he learned nothing from his WCW days. I know this because I heard the same melodrama and "foot-in-mouth" blather I heard from him two years ago. Case in point: About three minutes into the opening match, Madden was braying that the cruiserweights were wrestling "for survival" and "out of instinct." Huh? He also said the brass ring for the winner was "more TV time." Wonder if the wrestlers knew that. □



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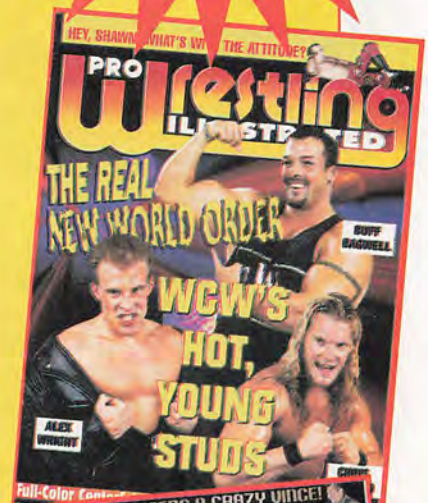

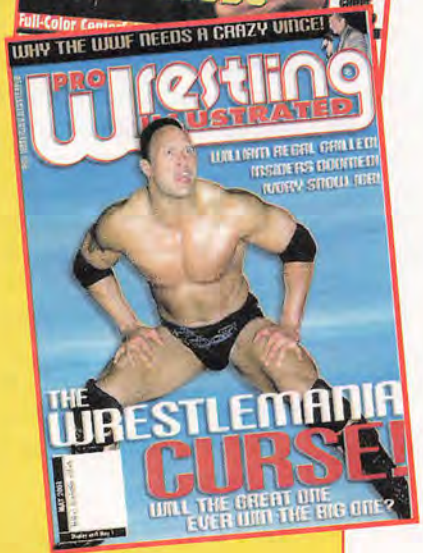

April 1985: Jimmy Snuka: "I Want Piper!"—Even If It Kills The Tonga Kid. Centerfold: Ronnie Garvin. Plus: Flair-Rhodes, Terry Gordy, Jim Garvin, Road Warriors.

June 1985: Super Dream Contest: Play Dusty Rhodes' Trivia Game And Win His Boots! Centerfold: Barry Windham. Plus: Flair-Kerry, Fabulous Ones-Road Warriors, Hogan-Volkoff, Magnum T.A.

January 1990: Warrior's Next Victim: Hulk Hogan? Centerfold: Sid Vicious. Plus: Kerry Von Erich, Jim Ross, Midnight Express.

May 1990: Hulk Hogan: Primed And Ready For WrestleMania VI. Centerfold: Great Muta. Plus: Piper-Rude, Eric Embry, Rock 'n' Rolls, Sid Vicious, pain.

July 1990: The Maturing Of Lex Luger: The "Total Package" Becomes The People's Choice. Centerfold: Rick Martel. Plus: Skyscrapers, Bobby Heenan, Mr. Saito, referees.

September 1990: The Hulkster's Wrath: 7,000 Miles To Violent Redemption. Centerfold: The Steiners. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Sting, Destruction Crew, Four Horsemen, Curt Hennig.

October 1990: Sting's Painful Lesson: You'll Have No Friends At The Top. Centerfold: Brutus Beefcake. Plus: Orndorff-Blanchard, Tugboat, Long, Ultimate Warrior, Road Warriors.

February 1991: WrestleMania VII Contest. fold: 1991 calendar. Plus: Sid Vicious, DiBias Rhodes, Scott Steiner, Power & Glory, Terry

April 1991: Sgt. Slaughter Guilty Of Treas Centerfold: Tom Zenk. Plus: Sting, Magnum Jesse Ventura, Lawler-Gilbert, Hogan & War

June 1991: Hulk Hogan: America's Hero. Centerfold: Hacksaw Duggan. Plus: Cactus Ric Flair, Nasty Boys, Steiners, Simmons-Re

July 1991: The War Is Over! Hulk Hogan Liberates The WWF Belt From Sgt. Slaug Centerfold: Brian Pillman. Plus: Horsemen, Luger, Eric Embry, Demolition.

August 1991 (Special Issue): Supercards ' terfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: WrestleMania VII, New Japan, Ultimate Warrior, Owen Hart, Ko

October 1991: Sid Justice: The Second (Of Hulk Hogan. Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plu Hogan-Slaughter, Terrence Taylor, Barry Wi Williams-Bigelow.

November 1991: Your Wedding Gift For & Elizabeth: Help Lift The "Macho Man's Suspension! Centerfold: Bobby Eaton. Plu Santana, Bushwhackers, Jushin Liger, Bria

February 1992: Has Hulk Hogan Had En Centerfold: 1992 calendar. Plus: Sting, Jus Roberts, hot prospects, Eddie Gilbert.

May 1992: Revitalized In Tokyo: Hulk H Super-Psyched For WrestleMania VII! C Rick Rude. Plus: Sting & Muta-Steiners, Ja Fuller, Lightning Kid, Randy Savage, intim

June 1992: Exclusive *PWI* Interview: Rc Speaks Out! Centerfold: Dustin Rhodes. Dangerously-Sting, Abdullah-Cactus, Sid Randy Savage.

July 1992: The Best Of The Best—The Masters Of Their Craft. Centerfold: Randy Savage. Plus: Liger-Pillman, Jim Neidhart, U.S.-Japan, Ric Flair.

September 1992: Savage vs. Sting: Why It Isn't That Unlikely. Centerfold: Nikita Koloff. Plus: Steiners, Barry Windham, Sid Justice, Hodge & Weston, Shawn Michaels.

October 1992: The Hatred Still Runs Deep: Ultimate Warrior vs. Randy Savage—They'll Settle Up At SummerSlam! Centerfold: Cactus Jack. Plus: Steve Williams, Tom Zenk, WWF title controversy, fire match, Eric Embry.

November 1992: The British Bulldog: Hounding The Hitman. Centerfold: Ultimate Warrior. Plus: Honky Tonk Man, Steiners, Undertaker, Madusa, perfect wrestler.

February 1993: No One Can Cut Down Razor Ramon. Centerfold: Curt Hennig. Plus: Jake Roberts, Pillman-Dustin, Ric Flair-Road Warriors, Rick Rude, Snuka-Muraco.

May 1993: WrestleMania Without Hulk Hogan? Centerfold: The Undertaker. Plus: Ron Simmons, Cactus Jack, Madusa-Sherri, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior.

April 1996: WCW World Title Turmoil. Centerfold: The Kid. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Ahmed Johnson, Bob

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July 1998: WWF vs. WCW: Which Is Better? Centerfold: Rocky Maivia. Plus: Benoit, Bill Goldberg, Ahmed Johnson.
October 1998: Bret Screws Bret, Part II. Centerfold: Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Plus: Jim Ross, Marcus Bagwell, WWF controversy, FBI.
November 1998: Vince Mc(Mad)Man! He Crossed The Bottom Line ... Now He'll Pay! Centerfold: Kevin Nash. Plus: Sting, Bret Hart, Taz-Douglas, New Age Outlaws.
December 1998: Gold Rush! Get Ready For The Most Awesome WCW Title Reign Ever! Centerfold: Undertaker. Plus: The Giant, Vader, Guerreros, Ken Shamrock.
Holiday 1998 (100-Page Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Eighth Annual Special.
January 1999: No Evil! Can Today's Fans Accept The Warrior's Creed? Centerfold: Chyna. Plus: Sting, Bill Goldberg, Summerslam.
March 1999 (100-Page Special Issue): 1998—The Year In Wrestling. 1998 In Review, Achievement '98 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, Predictions for 1999.
April 1999: The Crock! The Title Change That Screwed The World! Centerfold: Chris Jericho. Plus: Bill Goldberg, Tommy Dreamer, Booker T, more Unofficial/Officials.
May 1999: Who Holds The Key To WrestleMania XV? Centerfold: Konnan. Plus: Mark Henry, Sting-Nash, Bill Alfonso, Brian Hildebrand.
June 1999: (100-Page Special Issue): The 1999 *PWI* Poll. Plus: Mankind, Flair & Turner, VMac, Steiners, New Japan-UFO.
July 1999: Warning! This Team Will Self-Destruct In 15 Seconds! Centerfold: X-Pac. Plus: New Jack-Dudleys, Jesse James, Venis & Godfather, Sting-Bischoff-Flair.
August 1999: (100-Page Special Issue): Supercards '99: WWF WrestleMania, WCW Uncensored, ECW Living Dangerously. Plus: Super 8, Bam Bam Bigelow, Jerry Lawler, tag team wrestling.
September 1999: Why Stone-Cold Might Get Out While He's Still On Top! Centerfold: Sting. Plus: Kidman & Misterio, The Rock, Bret Hart, Taz-Sabu.
October 1999: Why The World Must Fear Scott Steiner, By Buff Bagwell. Centerfold: Mankind. Plus: Kane & X-Pac, The Godfather, Perry Saturn, 20th anniversary readers' poll.
November 1999: The Women Of The WWF: There's More To Their Power Than Their Looks. Centerfold: Owen Hart. Plus: Rey Misterio Jr., Roddy Piper, Steiners, Steve Austin.
December 1999: Steve Austin: "CEO This! I'm The Damn Champ!" Centerfold: Rey Misterio Jr. Plus: Randy Savage, Jimmy Hart, WCW youth, Billy Gunn.
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May 2000 (100-Page Special Issue): The Y2K *PWI* Poll. Plus: Mitsuharu Misawa, Triple-H, Bret Hart, Hollys, Chyna & Aysa, ECW returnees.
June 2000: Just Wondering, Steph ... Is Triple-H Worth Your Billion-Dollar Inheritance? Centerfold: The Rock. Plus: Heyman-Van Dam, Vader, NWO.
July 2000: Call It A Wrap, Jack! You've Done Your Share ... Go Home! Centerfold: Sid Vicious. Plus: Dusty Rhodes, Disco Inferno, DDP, Dudleys-Hardys.
August 2000 (100-Page Special Issue): Supercards 2000: WWF WrestleMania, WCW Uncensored, ECW Living Dangerously. Plus: Rob Van Dam, greatest supercards, Super 8.
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October 2000: Scott Steiner: The Superstars The WWF Let Slip Away. Centerfold: Rikishi. Plus: Shawn Michaels, Austin-Rock, Rhino-RVD.
November 2000: The Rock vs. Triple-H. Our Special 50-Category Analysis. Pinups: Extreme wrestling. Plus: Nash-Steiner-Hall, Hardcore Holly, wrestling too extreme?
December 2000: Head Hog! Does Undertaker Have Enough Gas In His Tank To Rumble To The Top? Centerfold: Dallas Page. Plus: Kurt Angle, Rikishi, Vampiro-Sting, Japan.
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November 2001: A Crying Shane: He Paid The Price To Purchase WCW ... Is He Willing To Pay The Price To Keep It? Plus: DDP-Kimberly, Edge, Molly-Spike, Tajiri, Rob Van Dam, Mick Foley, Florida indies.
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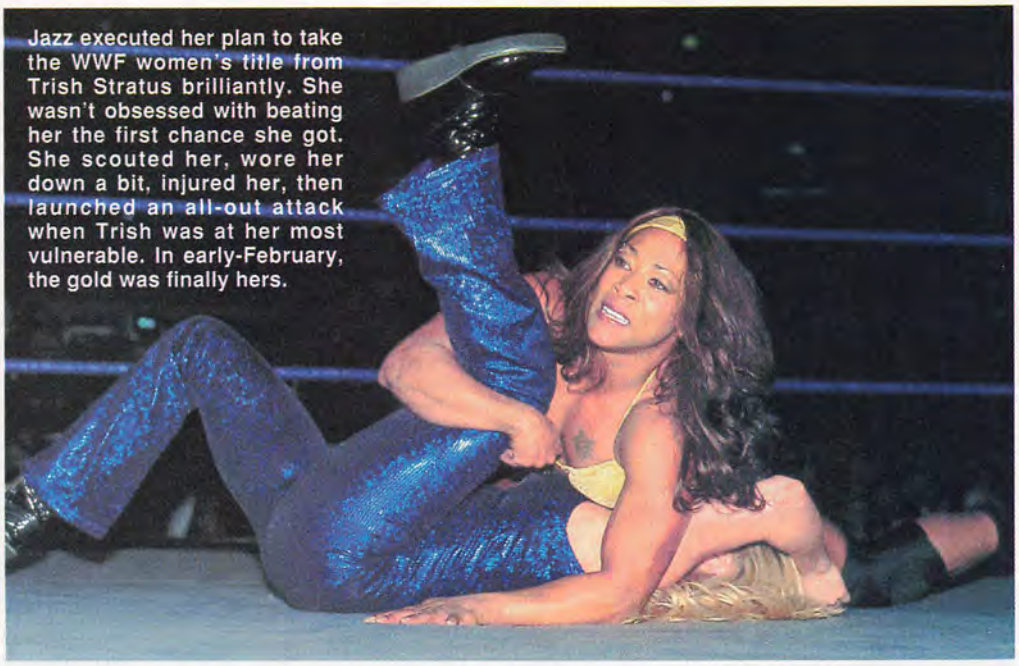


Jazz executed her plan to take the WWF women's title from Trish Stratus brilliantly. She wasn't obsessed with beating her the first chance she got. She scouted her, wore her down a bit, injured her, then launched an all-out attack when Trish was at her most vulnerable. In early-February, the gold was finally hers.

JAZZ

WRESTLING FANS HAVEN'T always been behind the WWF's women's division. For some reason, it doesn't always take. Some insiders and fans argue that the division is just a way for Vince McMahon to legitimize the presence of T & A on WWF programming. Others say that Federation officials should take some cues from Japan, where women's wrestling is a much more successful and lucrative business, and make sure that the women participating in the division are honest-to-God wrestlers, not glorified valets.

Almost everyone, however, agreed that the WWF needed to spark interest in what has historically been a joke division.

Hence the signing of Jazz.

A former ECW competitor, Jazz made her WWF TV debut in a six-pack challenge at Survivor Series 2001 as a surprise entrant—and what a surprise it was. She showed Jacquelyn, Lita, Ivory, Mighty Molly, and Trish Stratus what being focused and aggressive is all about. Even though Stratus walked away with the title that night, it was obvious that Jazz was at least her equal and maybe even a bit better. The feud was on.

Over the next couple of months, Jazz didn't go after Stratus directly. That would have been too obvious an approach. Instead, Jazz attacked nearly every other wrestling female on the WWF's roster. She stalked Stratus by eliminating Stratus' competition, then secured a title shot at the Royal Rumble by beating Jacquelyn in a number-one contenders match. There was nowhere for Stratus to go. The match had been made.

Surprisingly, Stratus won the match and retained her title.

But Jazz' assault hadn't ended. One loss was not going to end her dream of being WWF women's champion. On January 22 at ***Smackdown****, Stratus and Jazz wrestled again. Stratus won again, but only after Jazz got herself disqualified for ignoring the referee's command to release an armbar. The attack was meant to injure the champ. It worked. On February 4 at* ***Raw****, Jazz finally beat Stratus and became the WWF women's champion—and she looked terrific in the process.*

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker, Senior Writer Will Welsh, and Contributing Writer Liz Hunter met with Jazz to find out why she is the way she is, why she has a problem with other Federation divas, and who she thinks will step up and challenge her for supremacy in the women's division.

LIZ HUNTER: Welcome, Jazz. Thanks for agreeing to this interview.

JAZZ: Liz, I don't have a reason to refuse this interview. Why would I turn you guys down?

HUNTER: Oh, we never know what people are going to think when we ask them for an interview. Some are all for it, some are very much against it, and some don't care one way or the other.

JAZZ: Well, consider me a member of that first group.

HUNTER: Very well. Now that we have that out of the way, how do you think you've adjusted to the WWF?

JAZZ: I'm the women's champion, right? Doesn't that mean that I've adjusted very well?

> 'I SEE WEAKNESSES IN ALL THE WOMEN. TAKE JACQUELYN, FOR INSTANCE. WHAT'S ALL THIS REFEREE STUFF THAT SHE'S BEEN INVOLVED IN LATELY? SHE'S GETTING A LITTLE SOFT. LITA, TOO. SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHICH WAY IS UP. HER MIND'S CERTAINLY NOT ON *HER* CAREER ... I DON'T SEE ANYONE STEPPING UP AND GIVING ME A REAL CHALLENGE FOR A WHILE.'

DAVE LENKER: Yes, it absolutely does mean that. What I think Liz was asking, however, was how you've been accepted backstage among the other wrestlers, especially the female ones. I think all of us—Liz, Will, and I—have an image of you being not very popular. You seem like you're always angry. We're just wondering how well you get along with everyone.

JAZZ: I don't, Dave. If you're asking me if I go out partying with the boys and go mall shopping with the girls, I don't. That kind of thing has never been my style. I've always been more of a loner.

WILL WELSH: That kind of shocks me. In ECW, you were a very popular wrestler. I can remember you partnering with Nova and Chris Chetti during their battles with Danny Doring, Roadkill, and Lita, who I believe was going by the name Miss Congeniality at the time.

JAZZ: Yeah, that's right. I did team with Nova and Chetti. But so what! In ECW, there was no women's division. If I wanted to make an impact, I had to buddy up to some people. I had to let someone take me under their wing, so to speak.

WELSH: But I think there was more to that relationship than that, Jazz. I mean, sure, you did enter ECW as a member of Justin Credible's entourage, and you helped him win a number of matches ...

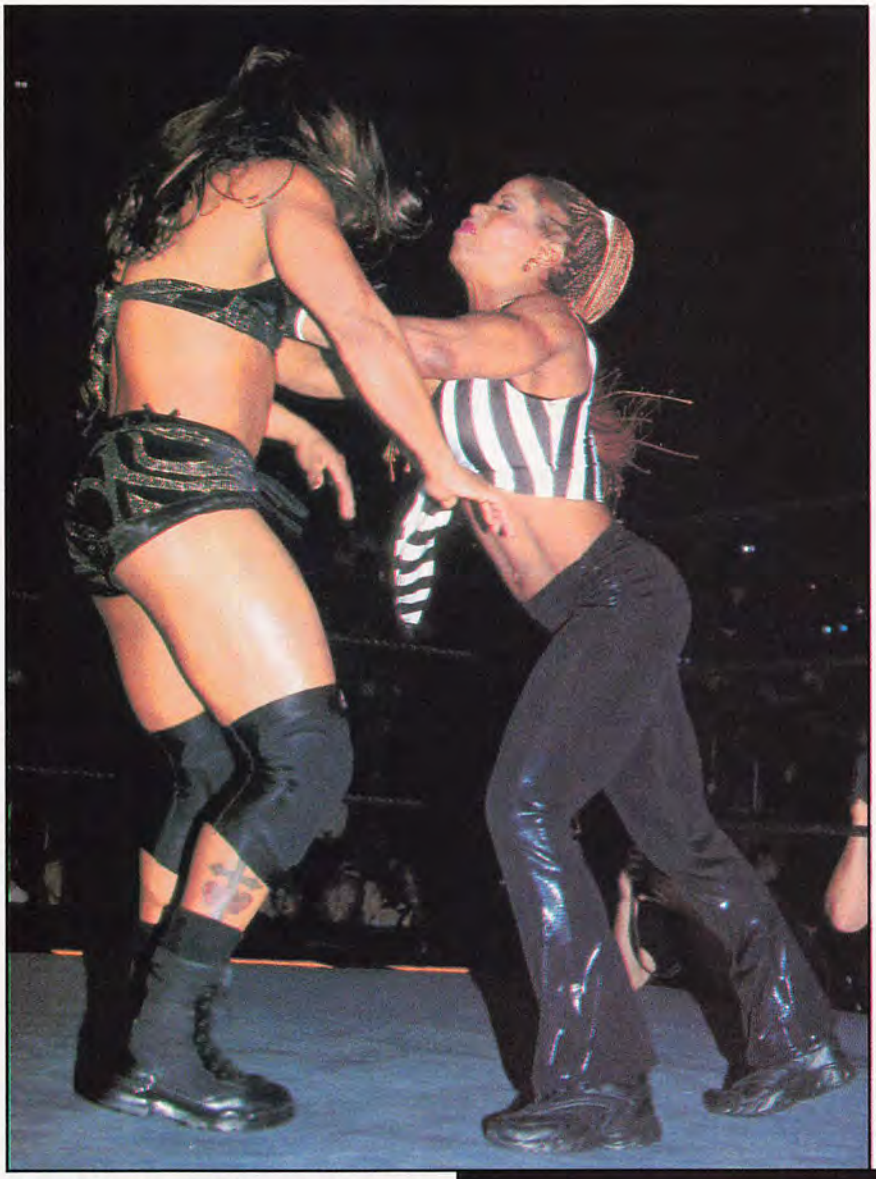
JAZZ: Yes.

WELSH: But I also remember that you left Credible after you realized that you weren't getting any credit for his success. That breakup led to a series of matches with Jason, Credible's bodyguard, for lack of a better term. You had the crowd solidly behind you in those matches.

JAZZ: Will, the fans will get behind any woman who stands up to a weakling like Jason. I didn't do anything special but stick up for myself. If the fans wanted to cheer for me, fine ... wonderful, but I wasn't asking them to.

LENKER: Oh no? Then why feud with Simon Diamond? I don't think there was a

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.



Jacquelyn is one WWF diva Jazz had better not underestimate. She drew Jackie's ire when Jackie refereed a series of her matches (above) and has handled her so far in competition (right), but Jackie has a lot of experience, a lot of skill, and a hot temper.

guy who was more despised.

JAZZ: I didn't like him.

LENKER: You weren't the only one, but that doesn't answer the question. Something happened between the time ECW shut down and the time that you debuted in the WWF. I don't believe that you never cared about the fans, because we get told that so often around here it makes us wonder if *anyone* cares about the fans. I just want to know what happened.

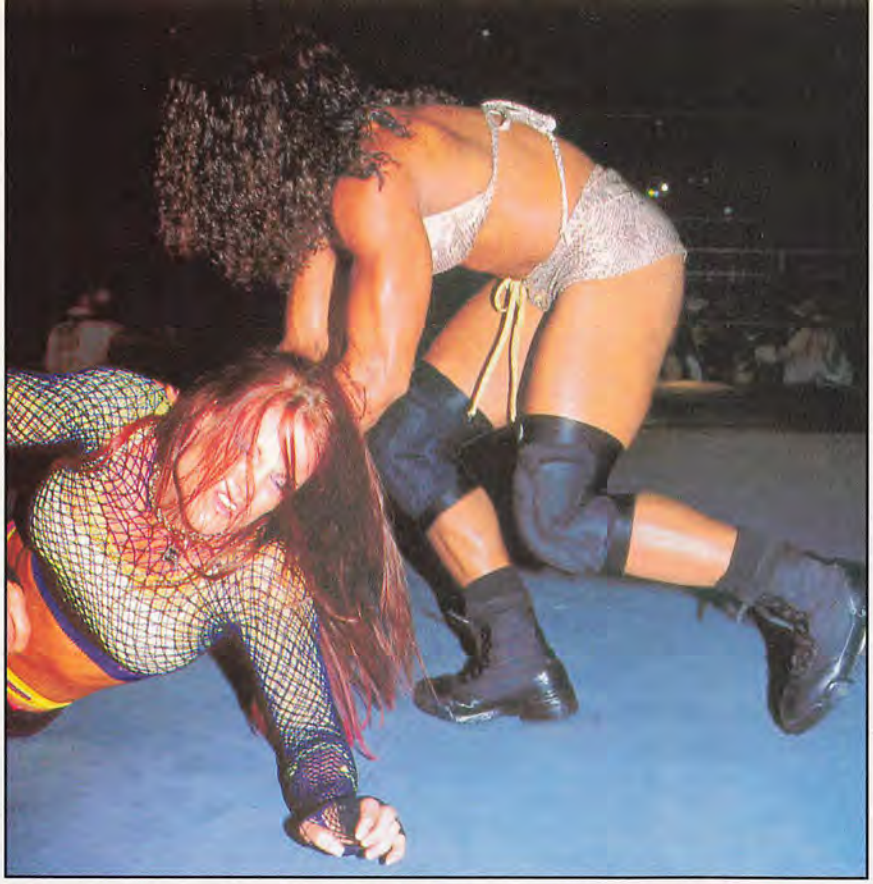
JAZZ: Okay, Dave. I'll tell you what happened during that period. I lost my job! Does that spell it out for you well enough? I was very happy in ECW. I could've stayed in the company forever. But it folded, went kaput, just disappeared. You know what that means, Dave? I suddenly had to worry about where the rent money was coming from, where my meals were going to come from. It's not very fun being unemployed and without too many job options.

HUNTER: But that still doesn't explain the change in your personality, Jazz.

JAZZ: Are you people stupid? Is it that hard to figure out that I am the way I am right now because of that experience? This isn't brain surgery. I don't ever want to be put in that situation again. So if that means that I have to develop a harder edge and take my career and my win/loss record more seriously than ever before, then that's what I'm going to do. So many people in the WWF don't understand how good they have it, how they've been walking in heaven. I think if the entire WWF roster went through what I had to suffer, you'd see a lot of personalities change.

WELSH: But Spike Dudley went through the same thing, and he didn't become this ultra-serious automaton. As far as I can tell, he still enjoys his job and comes to work every day with a smile on his face.

JAZZ: I guess that you never no-



Although Jazz doesn't agree, Lita, with her unorthodox style, could present problems to her if they ever entered into a full-blown feud. Jazz thinks the redhead is too concerned with the adventures of The Hardy Boyz to be a threat to her.

ticed that Spike's not all there, have you?

LENKER: Okay, let's get off this subject. I think we've established why Jazz is the way she is. What I want to know is this: Why Trish Stratus? What did she ever do to you?

JAZZ: She had something that I wanted, the WWF's women's title.

LENKER: That's it? There's no underlying reason why you decided to make this woman's life hell for a couple of months?

JAZZ: You mean other than the fact that she was the women's champion? Nope. I didn't need another reason. The way I figure it, my job with the WWF is secure if I'm the champ. They can't just let me go if I'm wearing the gold.

HUNTER: Are you forgetting what happened with Chyna?

JAZZ: Who?

WELSH: Now that's just about the cockiest thing that I've ever heard.

LENKER: I feel the same way, but we're not about to go down that road. Jazz, looking at the WWF's roster right now, who do you see as being your biggest threat?

JAZZ: It's hard to say. I see weaknesses in all the women. Take Jacquelyn, for instance. What's all this referee stuff that she's been involved in lately? She's getting a little soft. Lita, too. She doesn't know which way is up. Her mind's certainly not on *her* career. She's too busy trying to keep the peace between those Hardy Boyz. Ivory is too much the here today, gone tomorrow type. Molly? She's just about the flakiest girl that I've ever met. Nope, I don't see anyone stepping up and giving me a real challenge for a while.

WELSH: You mentioned Molly. Why the need to attack her and injure her after you beat her? She didn't have the gold.

JAZZ: And she won't come looking for another title shot now. She knows what I can do to her. She's no longer a threat. It took one match to get rid of her.

WELSH: What about Stacy Keibler and Torrie Wilson? They've stepped into the ring on occasion.

JAZZ: Believe me, Will, the last thing those two pretty little things want to do is lock up with me. I might chip one of their nails or something.

LENKER: You still haven't mentioned Trish Stratus' name yet, Jazz. Out of everyone on the WWF's roster, she seems to be the woman who has given you the most trouble.

JAZZ: I didn't say Trish's name because I don't think she's a threat at all. I took her title. I beat her fair and square, even though most of the people think that I'm some kind of miserable cheat. If anything, she's probably lower on my list than any of those other women we've just mentioned. I've already had my way with her. She's like Molly. She's not going to come around looking for more trouble.

HUNTER: I think you'll be surprised. Trish didn't back away from Vince McMahon, and if there's one person you should back away from in the WWF, it's him. She might shock you.

JAZZ: That's where you're wrong. I won't be surprised. I know Trish is gonna try and take another run at me. I'm just not concerned, that's all. Not concerned in the least. □

Jazz had the ECW crowd on her side when she challenged men like C.W. Anderson. She hasn't sought matches with men in the WWF, and she doesn't care that WWF fans don't like her. All she wants to do is dominate the women's division.

SHATTERED

Where's "Marlena"

Ah, the good times—the days when Goldust and "Marlena" were not only a married couple (above), but also a dangerous team inside the ring. Goldust didn't get off to a great start after returning to the WWF in January. Rob Van Dam clearly got the best of him at No Way Out (below), and 'Dust looks like he could use guidance. Is Terri ready and willing to transform herself back into Marlena?

DREAMS SEQUEL

When Goldust Needs Her?

By Frank Krewda

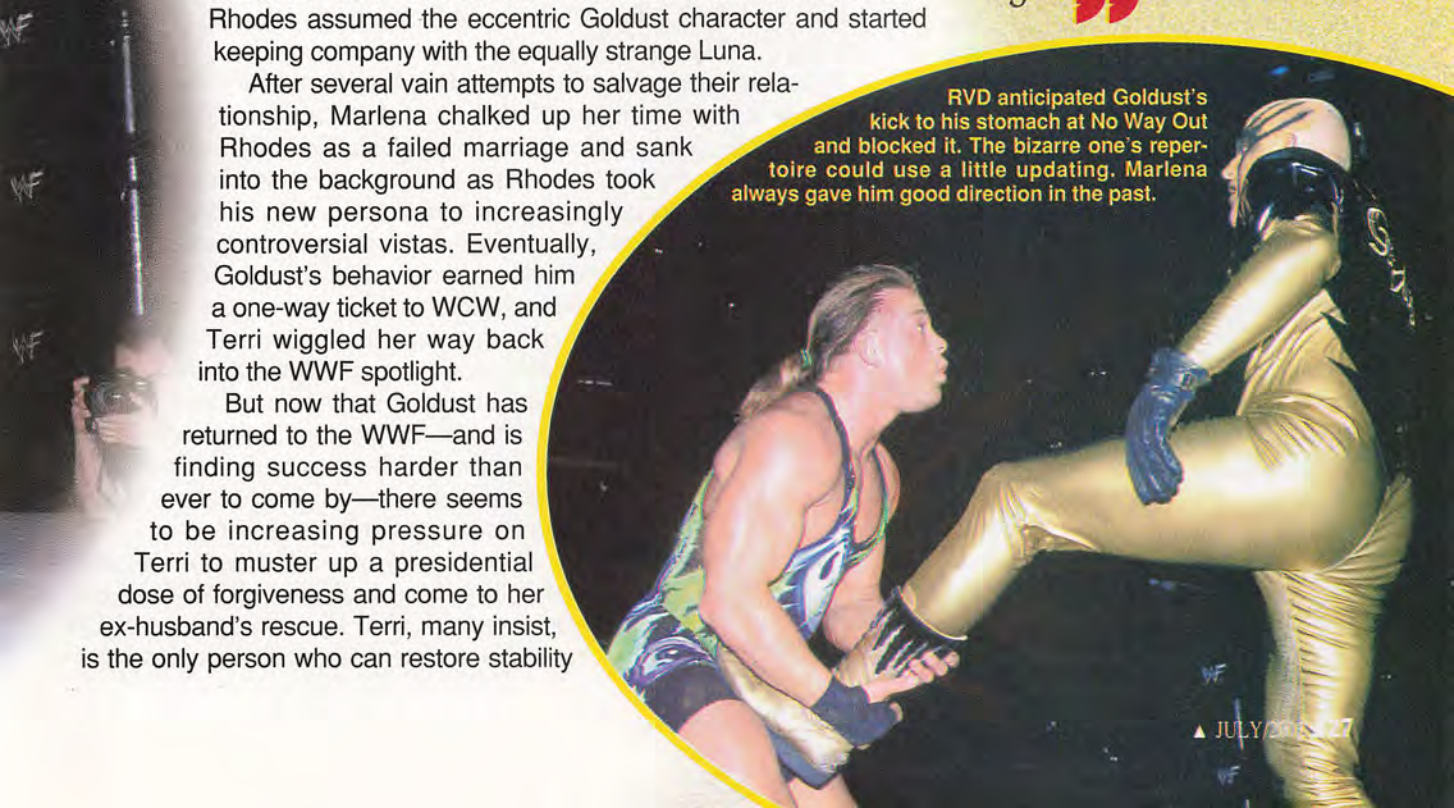
REGARDLESS OF THEIR political persuasion, a lot of people give former First Lady Hillary Rodham-Clinton credit for standing by her philandering husband, Bill, after details of his illicit affair with young intern Monica Lewinsky came to light. However, just as many level-headed Americans consider Hillary a fool for enduring such unmitigated humiliation so passively. Whether or not Hillary is a loyal wife or a feminist's nightmare, she ultimately bit her tongue for the benefit of somebody who shamelessly wronged her before the world.

It wasn't all that long ago that Goldust (a.k.a. Dustin Rhodes) publicly embarrassed his then-wife, Marlena (a.k.a. Terri), in more blatant fashion. An obviously troubled Rhodes ran down Terri during a segment of *Raw* and all but abandoned his wife on national television. A few weeks later, Rhodes assumed the eccentric Goldust character and started keeping company with the equally strange Luna.

After several vain attempts to salvage their relationship, Marlena chalked up her time with Rhodes as a failed marriage and sank into the background as Rhodes took his new persona to increasingly controversial vistas. Eventually, Goldust's behavior earned him a one-way ticket to WCW, and Terri wiggled her way back into the WWF spotlight.

But now that Goldust has returned to the WWF—and is finding success harder than ever to come by—there seems to be increasing pressure on Terri to muster up a presidential dose of forgiveness and come to her ex-husband's rescue. Terri, many insist, is the only person who can restore stability

"But now that Goldust has returned to the WWF—and is finding success harder than ever to come by—there seems to be increasing pressure on Terri to muster up a presidential dose of forgiveness and come to her ex-husband's rescue. Terri, many insist, is the only person who can restore stability to his career, his only chance at becoming a superstar again."



RVD anticipated Goldust's kick to his stomach at No Way Out and blocked it. The bizarre one's repertoire could use a little updating. Marlena always gave him good direction in the past.

Although Goldust turned in a decent performance against RVD, he did lose and, surprisingly, he made no effort to avenge the loss. What was the point of going after RVD in the first place then? He must not have had much of a plan. Marlena would have had one.

to his career, his only chance at becoming a superstar again. At the center of their argument is the notion that there would be less pressure on both Terri and Goldust since they're no longer married, and that just maybe a few fond memories would show him the sick folly of his current character.

"Somebody needs to straighten him out," said one WWF official. "Strange as it sounds, Marlena is his last link to normality. The way I see it, Dustin put his wrestling career on the back burner just to shock people. When he left Marlena, being a freak became his full-time job. But you have to be more than just a freak to win in the WWF these days; you have to be a wrestler in body and mind. Goldust left on a down note, and it looks like he's picked up right where he left off. She called herself Goldust's director, and the truth is, she did give him career direction."

The bizarre threats Goldust made against Van Dam before No Way Out didn't faze him in the least. Van Dam was ready for just about everything his new rival could throw at him. Maybe Marlena could give him a persona/image makeover. At least part of her must want to get back into the managerial game.

If Goldust's recent mini-feud with Rob Van Dam is any indication, our source is a superior judge of character. After a dubious return at the Royal Rumble, Goldust succeeded in spooking RVD with a series of cryptic promos. But once he met Van Dam in the ring, Goldust seemed unable to put together a great match. Of course, he had his moments against RVD, but on the whole, Van Dam established himself as being a cut above. Clearly, Goldust seemed more interested in playing the mind games that led to his departure in the first place. Could Terri/Marlena have made a difference? Would Goldust have even provoked Van Dam had she been in the picture? There seemed to be no reason for them to feud. When Marlena was "directing" him, all his bizarre behavior served a purpose in his career.

"I don't know how many people are aware of it, but Terri lobbied the WWF to bring Goldust back after Vince bought out WCW," noted our source. "It's not like couples have to

Somehow Goldust has to find a way to make the huge jump from wrestling RVD in matches of little consequence (left) to battling Steve Austin in main events again (below left). It doesn't look like he is going to be able to do that on his own.

be enemies after they divorce. Randy Savage and Elizabeth had a professional relationship years later. This could happen."

The naysayers maintain that there are many factors that would make a reunion unlikely. First, although Terri is hardly conservative, she seems disinterested in guiding the careers of nut cases. Consider the way she distanced herself so abruptly from Perry Saturn once he fell in love with Moppy. Now compare Saturn to Goldust, a man who once petitioned Vince McMahon to get him breast implants. Saturn looks as sober as a judge next to Dustin. Terri would be foolish to subject herself to Goldust's shenanigans.

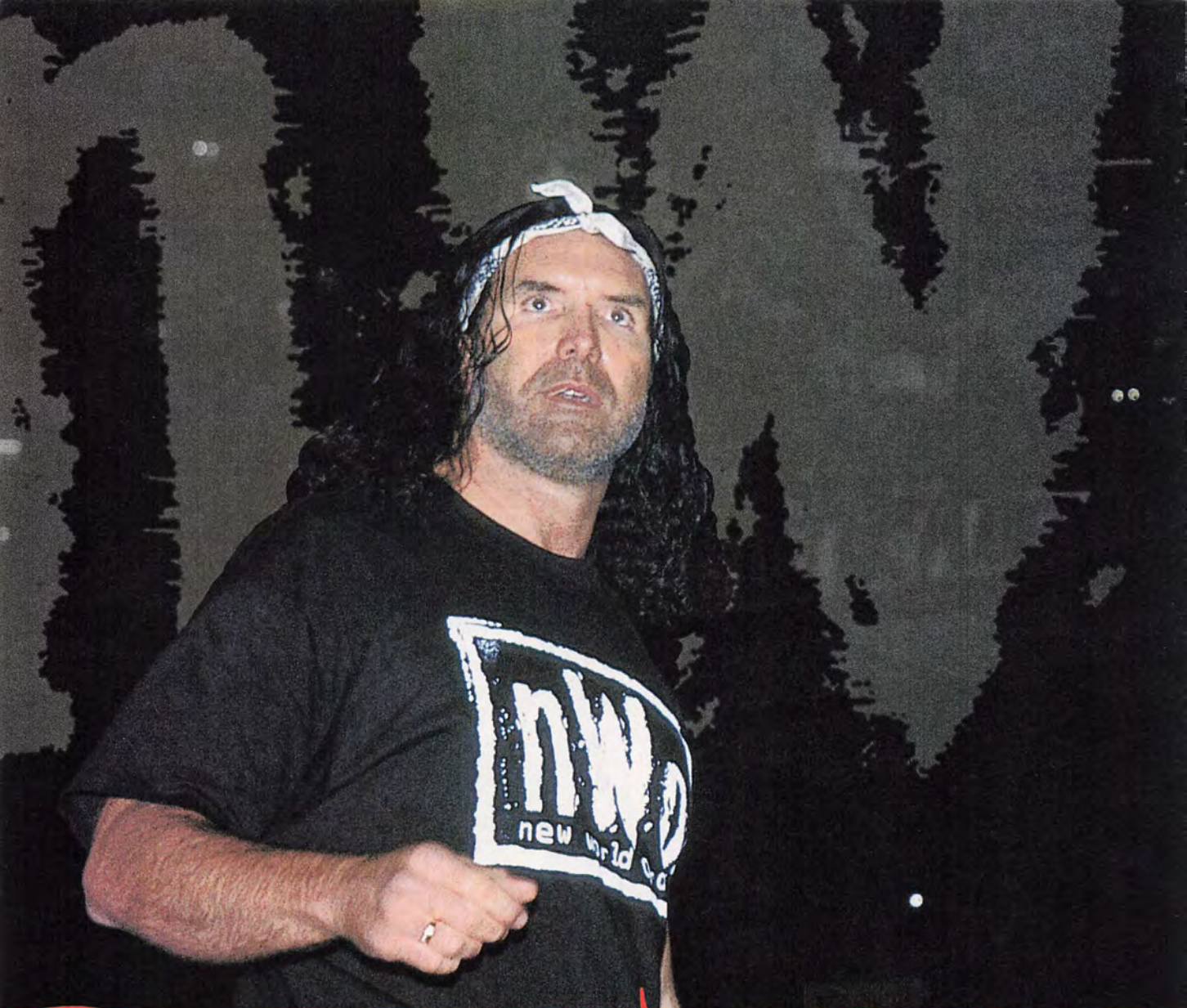
Second, Goldust spurned her. How many women could forgive a man for walking out on her on national TV? True, that was years ago, but the wounds Terri suffered at Goldust's hands can take a lifetime to heal. She might never be ready to befriend him again. Besides, there's no guarantee Goldust would respond to her presence as hoped. Odds are, it would only be a matter of time before he remembered what it was that drove him to his current state. Obviously, the man needs help getting his career and his life back on track, but would he accept it from Terri?

Third, Terri has her image and reputation to consider. She's become one of the WWF's hottest and most popular divas, and even though she's no threat to the likes of Jazz, Lita, or even Trish Stratus on the mat, Terri's attracted a cult-like following that enjoys her much more in her recent roles.

Why would she trade tropical photo shoots and a relatively easy *Excess* gig for the rigors of being a manager/director? Easy—because she loves the spotlight. She *craves* it. This is a woman who once created a rivalry between The Hardy Boyz and Edge and Christian that became more about her than any of them, as she promised to manage the duo that won the series of matches. *Excess* draws less than one-quarter of the audience drawn by *Raw* and *Smackdown* on a typical week. Although Terri does a nice job as co-host, she must crave a bigger role in the company. Imagine the reaction she would get if she strolled to ringside in one of those skimpy gold outfits "Marlena" used to wear, smoking a fine cigar as she used to do as Goldust's director. The spotlight would be hers again. People would be talking about her again.

All those reasons not to do it suddenly wouldn't matter anymore. It'd be risky, but Terri (and "Marlena") enjoy living on the edge.

Like our former First Lady, support for Terri probably falls on both sides of the fence now: Some would say she is an independent superstar who should forget the past, while others would say she is a heartless witch for not helping a man in need. But if helping this man in need also helped her, the opportunity might prove to be too difficult to pass up. □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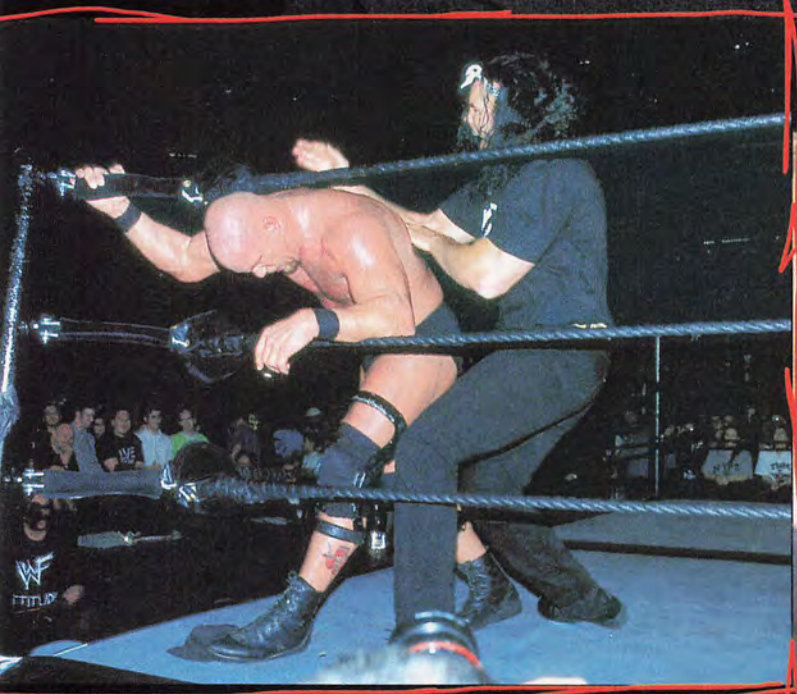
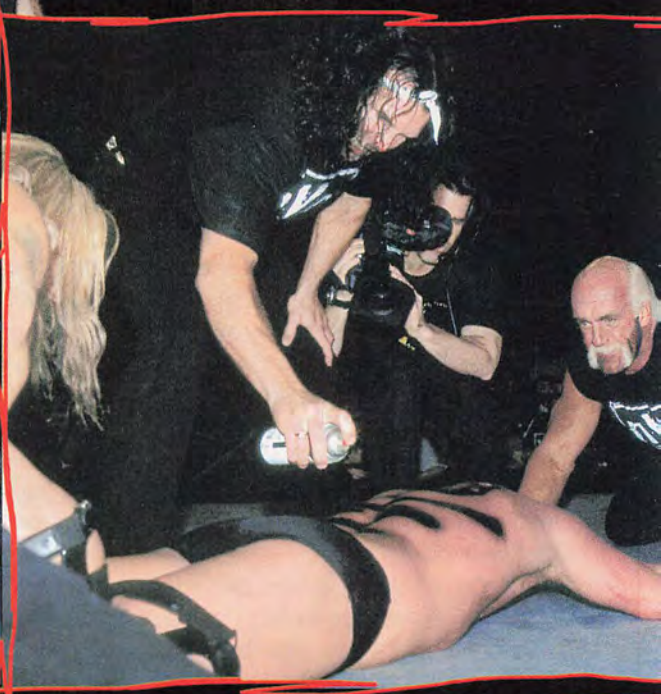




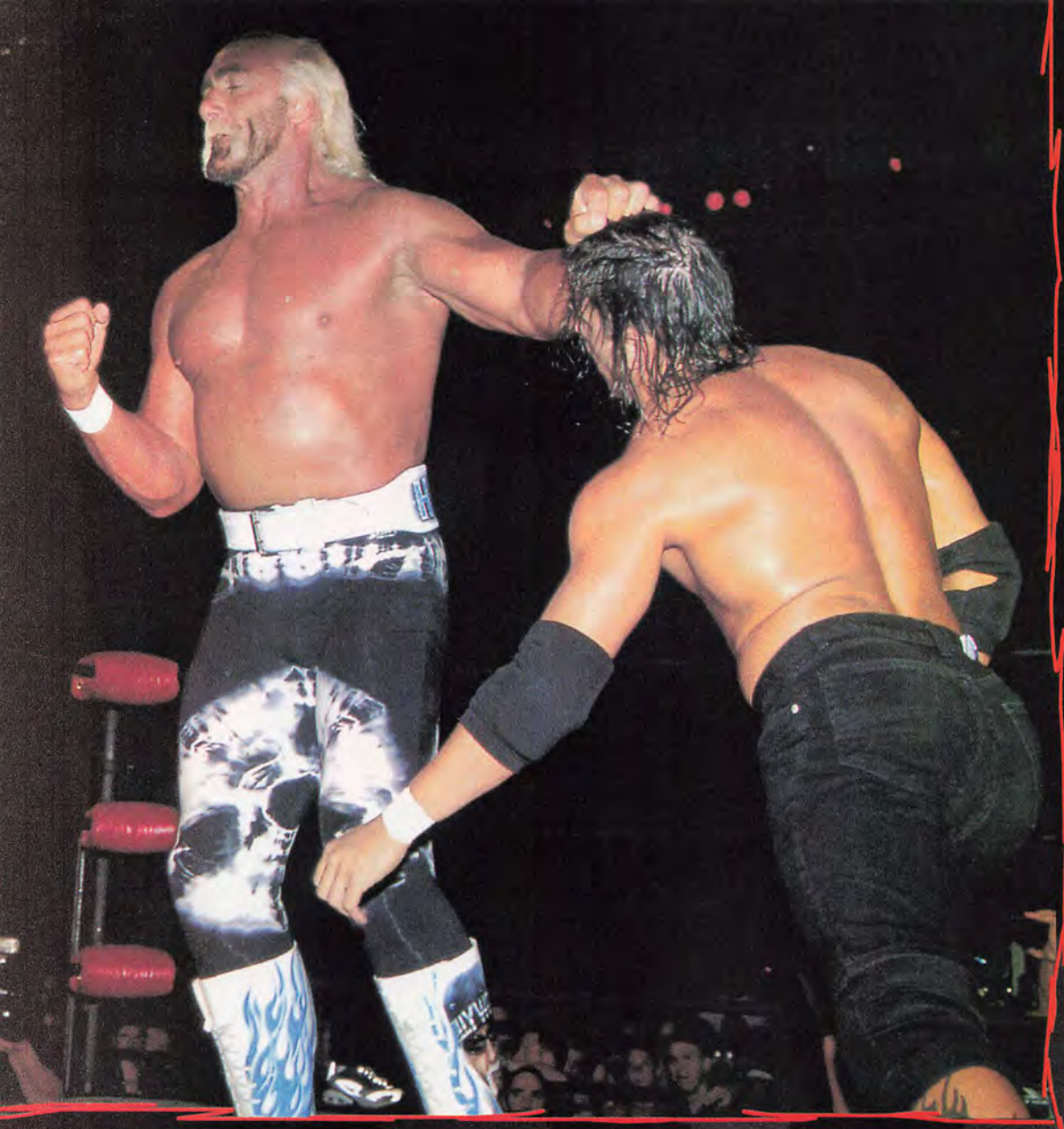
nWo faq

You only thought you knew it all!

INDIVIDUALLY, HULK HOGAN, Scott Hall, and Kevin Nash are three of the most controversial figures in wrestling history. Collectively, as the New World Order, they can best be described as anarchists. When rumors started flying about the possibility of their arrival in the WWF—months before anything was even close to concrete—fans and industry analysts immediately began speculating about the future. Given their pasts in both the WWF and WCW, nobody knew what to expect. They could come aboard as team players and help the WWF immensely, or they could scuttle the Fed from underneath without even trying to do so.

Interestingly enough, most industry analysts believed the latter was more likely to happen.

Now that they're actually in the Fed, though, the questions have become much more pertinent. They deserve blunt, honest answers. That's why we're here—to provide the tough answers. Here are your NWO frequently asked questions (FAQ).



All the NWO guys have reputations for holding younger talent—potential main-eventers of the future—down. Even when Hulk Hogan wrestled an extended series of matches with Billy Kidman in 2000, some said he went out of his way to make sure Kidman came out of it looking weak. Could the same kind of thing happen in the WWF?

WHY ARE PEOPLE SO WORRIED THAT THE NWO IS A POTENTIAL CANCER ON THE WWF?

Hogan, Hall, and Nash have a horrible reputation among wrestling insiders because they do have a history of creating locker room unrest. A lot of the WWF wrestlers they now pass in the halls probably want nothing to do with them, even if their presence does boost ratings, ticket sales, and pay-per-view buy rates. They've undoubtedly heard how Hogan, Hall, and Nash use their political pull to manipulate and coerce officials into giving them exactly what they want. In fact, many of them have seen the NWO machine in action—and they don't have fond memories of it.

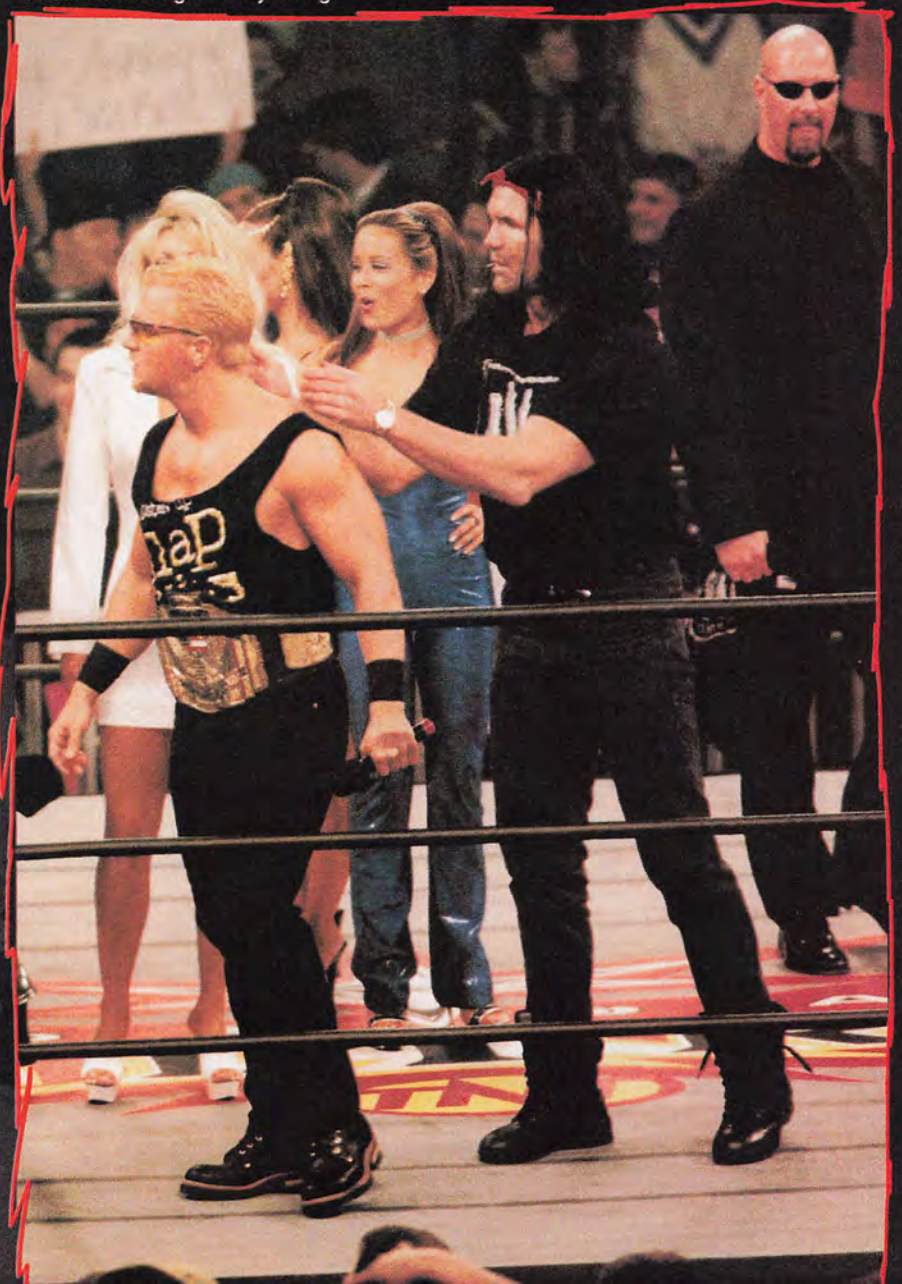
One of the NWO's problems is that one of its prime tenets has been "individual success first, company success second." That stands in stark contrast to the all-for-one, one-for-all WWF, in which everyone, from ring crew members to Vince McMahon himself, is considered an integral part of the WWF's success or failure. In order for the NWO to blend in backstage, the members must adopt the WWF's everyman philosophy. If they don't, they and the WWF will be in trouble.

Evidence? Just look at the NWO's run in WCW. Business skyrocketed for the first year or two after the NWO's formation. NWO T-shirts were selling like crazy, and the NWO's stars were the industry's darlings. If they had decided to, the NWO members could have created new stars from WCW's mid-card ranks, thereby cementing WCW's future for many, many years.

But instead of putting over wrestlers with main-event potential like Chris Jericho and Chris Benoit, WCW and the NWO chose to go the opposite route. Hogan and Nash dominated main events; Jericho and Benoit were left in the mid-card and eventually headed to the WWF because of their frustrations. Now that they're in the WWF, they're two of the Fed's biggest stars.

No doubt many people associated with the WWF are waiting for what happened in WCW to happen to them. Just the fact that Hogan, Hall, and Nash are in the Fed means that there are three less main-event positions. What do you think Edge thinks about that? Or Rob Van Dam? Even Y2J? They can't be pleased. As of press time, only weeks after the NWO invaded at the No Way Out pay-per-view, there were already quite a few disgruntled wrestlers. If WWF officials don't make any effort to limit the power of Hall, Nash, and Hogan, a chasm could develop—the same kind of chasm that eventually grew wider and wider and swallowed WCW whole.

The photo of the NWO's January 1999 reunion gives a good indication of just how big the NWO got at times (above). And there were still more versions of the group to come, even as late as the year 2000 (below). The NWO won't last four years in the WWF—and you can be sure it won't get nearly as big.



HOW LONG IS THE NWO LIKELY TO LAST?

Not as long as last time, that's for sure.

One of the main problems the NWO faced was that it became way too big and powerful for its own good. Once the NWO got underway, it couldn't be stopped. It was all-powerful, and too many wrestlers were associated with the group. Even if WCW officials had wanted to squeeze the NWO out of the picture, how could they have done it? A realistic solution proved impossible to devise. If WCW had gotten rid of the NWO, it would've emasculated itself in the process.

Vince McMahon won't let that happen to the WWF.

Look for the NWO to last a year at the most. Hogan, Hall, and Nash are past their primes, and it will be interesting to see if they will be able to stand the rigors of the WWF touring schedule—even if they're not scheduled to appear on as many non-televised house shows as most others on the roster (which they aren't). Keeping up with the Austins, Rocks, Triple-Hs, Angles, and Jerichos of the WWF will be no easy task. All three members of the NWO will have to work very hard to prove they deserve their cushy spots in the WWF, but they are smart enough to realize they won't be allowed to coast in this company. WWF superstars expect a lot from themselves and demand strong efforts from their peers, too.

Also, McMahon knows that the NWO, for all the positive name recognition it brings, had one fantastic year, one pretty good year, and about two miserable years. At the time it debuted in the WWF, the NWO was a fresh concept only because it hadn't appeared on TV in several years. Even though Hogan, Hall, and Nash are three of the biggest stars of the modern era, the NWO has the potential to grow stale quickly. The first time McMahon notices the fans losing interest, he'll end the experiment and split the NWO, perhaps sending Hogan, Hall, and Nash in different directions within the company.

SHOULD WE EXPECT ANY NEW MEMBERS?

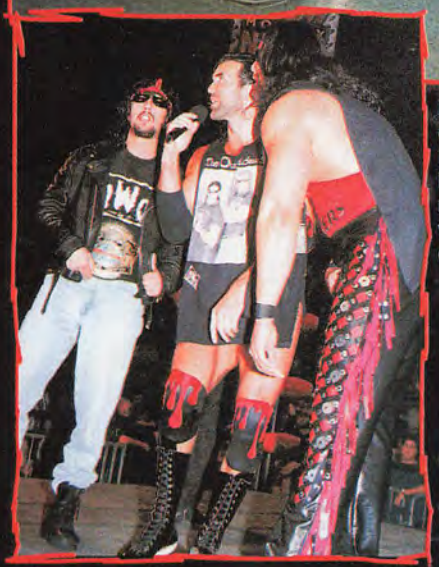
Absolutely, but don't expect a ton of them. One or two more members wouldn't be out of the question, but the NWO will not go back to its WCW-sized roster. It will not become an army, because McMahon will not put the NWO brand name in a position in which it could eclipse the WWF brand name, which is exactly what happened in WCW. The NWO will not get its own show, and it will never be split into factions like NWO Hollywood and NWO Wolfpac.

So who can you expect to see in the NWO? It'll be surprising if X-Pac hasn't already joined the group by the time you read this. He remains very tight with Hall and Nash, and the only reason that he didn't remain with the NWO in 1998 was that Eric Bischoff fired him in order to let Hall and Nash know that *he* was in charge, not them. It also helps that X-Pac was a catalyst in the success of DeGeneration X, a group that rivaled and eventually surpassed the NWO in terms of popularity. If anyone is a lock to join the group, it's him.

Another name being bandied about is that of former WWF champion Shawn Michaels. Why? Well, Michaels is also tight with Hall and Nash, and he was *the* key player in DX's initial rise. Back in 1996 and 1997, Michaels, along with "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin, defined WWF Attitude. If he had been in WCW, "The Heartbreak Kid" definitely would have been NWO material.

Michaels, however, might never make it to the WWF's NWO roster. He has a lot working against him. First of all, his back hasn't magically healed since he retired four years ago. Not even he knows if his back can withstand *a* match, let alone weekly or even monthly matches. That's why he hasn't done anything of consequence in the ring since being defeated for the WWF title at WrestleMania XIV. His body is too big of a question mark.

Then there's the issue of Michaels' personality: There has been no bigger rabble-rouser in the sport's history, and according to various WWF officials, there are signs that Michaels still hasn't matured in that respect. Entrusting him with a top spot is something that many WWF officials probably don't want to do at this stage of his career.



DeGeneration X was in some ways the NWO of the WWF (above). We could see Shawn Michaels pulling on an NWO T-shirt in 2002, but not his old pal Triple-H. However, the man most likely to join the group is X-Pac, who was also one of the first additions to the original NWO (left).

As for Triple-H, although he remained friendly with Hall and Nash after they left the WWF in 1996, he's too big a star on his own right now. Why would he want to be part of a group? His estranged wife, Stephanie? Now she's a possibility.

IS ERIC BISCHOFF COMING IN TO LEAD THE NWO?

Even though nothing official has been announced, we're confident that

There was some thought given to bringing in Eric Bischoff at the time of last summer's WCW invasion. It'd make even more sense to bring him in as the mastermind of the NWO in the WWF now.

the former WCW president will eventually show up on WWF TV as the mastermind behind the NWO. He's too strong a personality for McMahon to just let sit on the sidelines.

Are there issues with Bischoff coming in? You betcha. Bischoff made WCW's war with the WWF very personal at times. He wanted to prove that he could beat McMahon at his own game, and for a while, he did just that. In an interview with *PWI* two years ago, Bischoff said he wasn't sure that McMahon would ever want to work with him because of that fact:

"Now, I don't know if Vince McMahon is ... I don't want to say mature enough, because that's painting the wrong picture, but we've affected his life. Right now, it's been affected for the better in my opinion, but there was a period of time there where some of the things that I did affected him in a not-so-great way. I'm not sure that he's comfortable enough with his situation now that he would ever look at all the business opportunities of Eric Bischoff working for the WWF and realize how much money that could have made."

A few months ago, though, Bischoff spoke with *PWI* again on the subject of his working for the WWF, and his opinion had changed radically:

"I could make a relationship with anybody. It doesn't really matter to me. It all depends on the environment. It's just business."

Our guess is that McMahon is smart enough to realize how valuable Bischoff would be to the WWF in an on-air role. Without having to worry about the day-to-day responsibilities of running an international wrestling promotion, Bischoff might be able to make his heel promoter character more entertaining than ever before. McMahon must act fast, though. Bischoff's 15 minutes ended more than a year ago. The longer he's not heard from, the less of an impact he'll make when he does return.

WILL THE NWO HAVE A HAND IN THE WORLD TITLE PICTURE?

In order for it to be effective, the NWO *has* to impact the title picture. For all the talk about destroying the WWF, Hogan, Hall, and Nash need to be focused on getting the WWF World title in their possession more than anything else.

Besides, they're not really going to kill the company in the way McMahon said they would on TV anyway. Exactly how would they do that? By injuring all the WWF wrestlers so that there could be no shows?

If they don't pursue the title, what are they doing in the Fed in the first place? Simply collecting checks? (Stop your snickering!) Of course, this leads to the next question: Which NWO member will be the one to wear the gold when it does come time for the NWO to win the title?

The obvious answer is Hogan. He's a bigger star than either Hall or Nash, and of the three, he'd easily draw the most mainstream media coverage as the WWF champion. Maybe he could even challenge Jay Leno to another wrestling match, though we would suggest that Dennis Rodman's invitation get lost in the mail.

Nash is also a candidate to wear the WWF World title, but we just don't see it happening. When he was WWF champion as Diesel, from November 1994 to November 1995, the WWF suffered through one of its worst periods ever—and much of the blame was laid squarely at Nash's feet, although that probably wasn't entirely fair. Even given McMahon's fondness for promoting big men as his champion, we have a hard time envisioning him getting that title belt strapped around his waist for a second time.

If Nash does get a second chance with the title, don't expect a lengthy run. At best, McMahon probably sees him as someone capable of being a transitional champion. The WWF chairman likes proven commodities, and when Nash was WWF champion, he didn't prove enough.

As for Scott Hall, well, there is no World title in his future. It's a shame, too, because as long as he stays clean and sober, he's probably the NWO member who could offer the WWF the most in terms of in-ring ability. Unfortunately, he's also the NWO member who could prove to be the biggest liability. □

Kevin Nash (as Diesel) held the WWF World title for almost a full year in 1994-95. Too bad for him it wasn't one of the WWF's best years. Should Nash be blamed for that? If so, how much? Those issues could be debated for hours. But it might be very difficult for Nash to earn another run as Vince McMahon's champion.

THREE-TIME UFC TITLIST

RON WATERMAN

WHY HE WILL ACCOMPLISH WHAT DAN SEVERN COULDN'T

By Dan Murphy

"Is that Scott Steiner?"
"I think so. Man, look how fast he's moving! He looks like he's in the best shape of his life."
—Conversation overheard in the upper deck of the Rockford (Illinois) Metro Center at a recent *Smackdown*

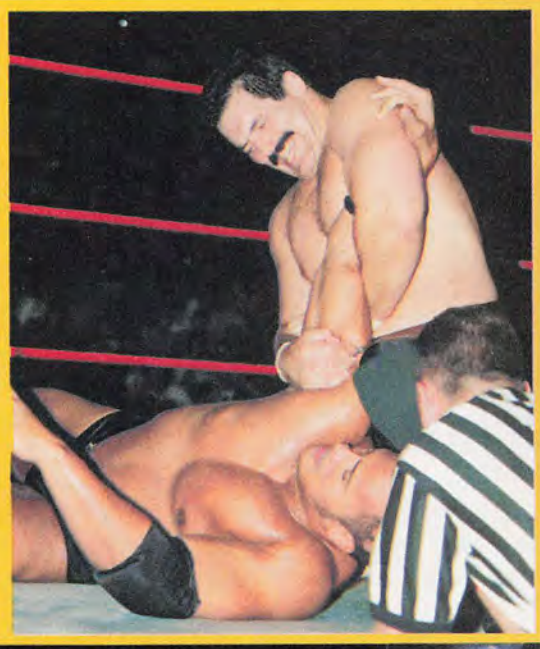
A NOTE TO the hundreds of befuddled fans who have seen Ron Waterman competing in dark matches at WWF TV tapings or on house shows over the past few months—he's *not* Scott Steiner.

We can see how people might get confused. Waterman may not be a genetic freak, but his physique is right up there with Steiner's among the most impressive in wrestling. With his close-cropped blond hair and goatee, Waterman indeed does bear a striking resemblance to "Big Poppa Pump." Despite what you may have heard from some fans in the cheap seats, Waterman is not two-time WCW World champion Scott Steiner.

For the past several months, Waterman (also known as "H2O") has been making a name for himself in Ohio Valley Wrestling. In the confines of the tiny Davis Arena in Jeffersonville, Indiana, the 275-pound three-time Ultimate Fighting Champion has been making the transition from the shootfighting octagon to the pro wrestling ring.

That transition has been surprisingly difficult for other former UFC competitors. Dan Severn was able to win and hold the NWA title for four years, but he ultimately was unable to adapt to the WWF's style. Tank Abbott's basic brawling skills couldn't help him break out of the WCW mid-card ranks, and he didn't even last there long. Only Ken Shamrock has been able to parlay his UFC success into title

> "Other UFC athletes … tried to transfer their UFC skills to wrestling. Waterman, on the other hand, concentrates on perfecting power moves such as bodyslams and vertical suplexes, as well as conventional wrestling wear-down holds such as wristlocks, chinlocks, and anklelocks."



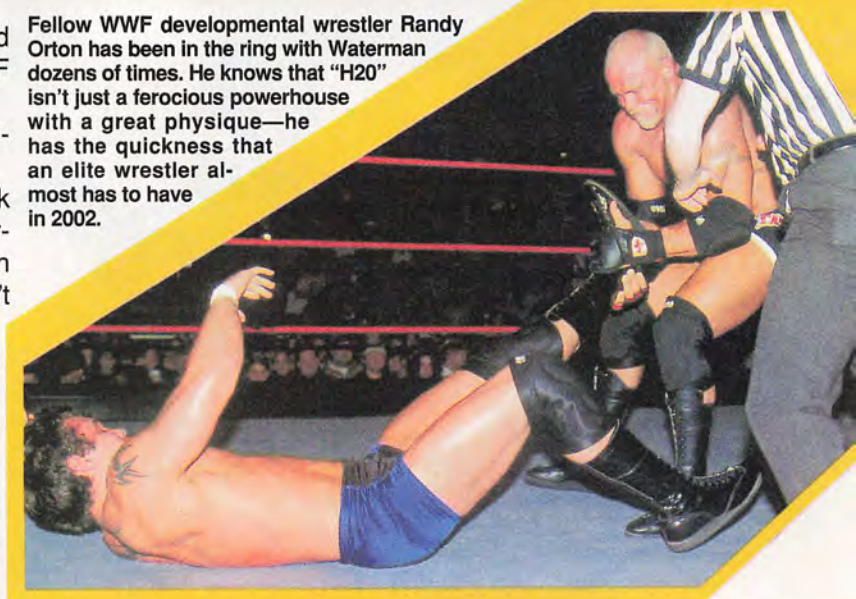
You don't see many superplexes like the one Ron Waterman is using on Rico Constantino in the UFC, but Waterman knows he is not in the UFC anymore. He's adapting quickly to his new profession. That's why he has a much better chance to become a pro wrestling superstar than another former UFC standout, Dan Severn (opposite page), ever did.

success in pro wrestling's major leagues, and that was only after months of extensive WWF training.

Unlike his predecessors, Waterman's transition to the ring has been almost seamless.

"'H2O' has taken to pro wrestling like a duck takes to water," said OVW promoter Jim Cornette. "Ron came in here with his head on straight. He knew enough to know that he didn't know everything. Wrestling and UFC are worlds apart, and Ron knew it. He has been an incredible student of the sweet science of wrestling. I consider him to be the closest thing to a can't-miss prospect I've seen in years."

Don't be too quick to chalk up Cornette's comments to his typical hyperbole. Fans, fellow wrestlers, and promoters have been quick to praise the Greeley, Colorado, native as well. Even Jim Ross has jumped on the "H2O" bandwagon, calling Waterman a tremendous talent and "a first-class human being."



Fellow WWF developmental wrestler Randy Orton has been in the ring with Waterman dozens of times. He knows that "H2O" isn't just a ferocious powerhouse with a great physique—he has the quickness that an elite wrestler almost has to have in 2002.

Why all the praise for someone who, as of press time, hadn't appeared on WWF TV once? Considering the less-than-stellar track record former UFC competitors have had in wrestling, what sets Waterman apart? To adequately answer that question, let's compare him to Severn, the first UFC competitor to make the jump.

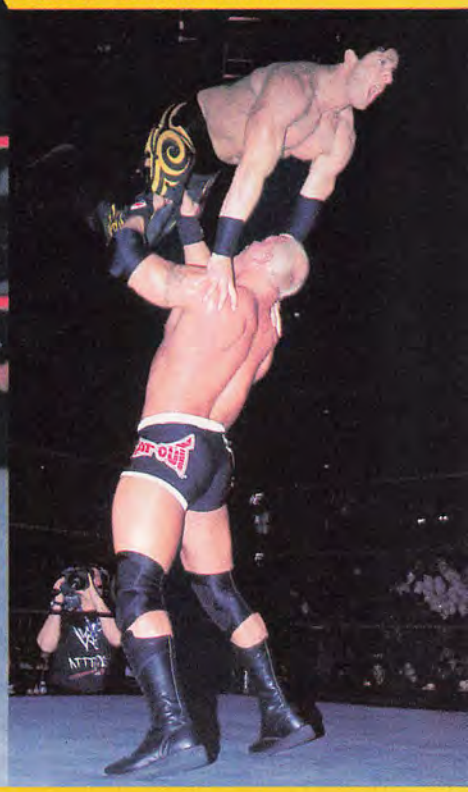
"The Beast" came into pro wrestling with an extensive knowledge of grappling techniques and submission holds. He utilized a slow-paced, methodical offense and sometimes seemed lost when opponents came at him with an aerial-based attack. Severn also seemed tentative in the ring, pausing between moves as if he was unsure if he was executing them properly. As a pro wrestler, Severn was forced and stiff. With his plain black trunks and nondescript entrances, he had no flash—no personality—to set him apart from the rest of the roster. In spite of his vast grappling talents, Severn cut some truly awful promos, even though he is well-spoken and funny when he doesn't have a mike in his hand.

If Severn could lure his opponent into a catch-as-catch-can-style match, he could hang with and even beat anyone in the sport. But if Severn was forced to alter his style, he was in trouble.

Those old UFC instincts come to the fore when Waterman has an opportunity to attack an opponent outside the ring (below left and below right). Although he won't appreciate it if you call him Scott Steiner or even compare him to Scott Steiner, he has a little Steiner in him. If he's been wronged or provoked, watch out for that temper.

Unlike Severn, Waterman has a body that screams for attention. Whereas Severn had a solid build, Waterman looks like a tank. Waterman also possesses great foot speed. From bounding off the ropes to timing a standing dropkick to hit a moving opponent, his movements are always fluid. Waterman also throws a ferocious

The submission skills he learned as a three-time UFC champion can come in quite handy when Waterman is wrestling. If he can target a specific body part—one of Randy Orton's legs, for example—he can wear it down, then apply one of many devastating holds that served him well in his previous career.



A back bodydrop is a fairly simple wrestling move, but Waterman took the time to learn to execute that and other basic moves/holds properly. He isn't relying heavily on his UFC repertoire, and that's very important. Jim Cornette, who has seen a lot of him in OVW, is expecting big, big things from him.

right hand and stiff elbowsmashes.

More importantly, "H2O" is working to perfect his *pro wrestling* skills. Other UFC athletes such as Severn and Abbott (and even Shamrock, to a lesser degree) were reluctant to abandon their forte and thus stuck to submission grappling, throws, and strikes. In other words, they tried to transfer their UFC skills to wrestling. Waterman, on the other hand, concentrates on perfecting power moves such as bodyslams and vertical suplexes, as well as conventional wrestling wear-down holds such as wristlocks, chinlocks, and anklelocks. Waterman's attention to wrestling fundamentals has helped him continue to evolve rather than let his skills stagnate. They also make him a more rounded, complex competitor.

After all, even without a strong knowledge of those fundamentals, Waterman has plenty of skills. He has 23 years of amateur wrestling experience and holds a black belt in jujitsu. He was a five-time letter winner in wrestling at the University of Northern Colorado and a national qualifier in the NCAA tournament.

On top of his athletic skills, "H2O" has personality to spare. In interviews, he's very articulate, but can fly into a Steiner-esque rage if the situation calls for it. His tremendous versatility is his greatest strength.

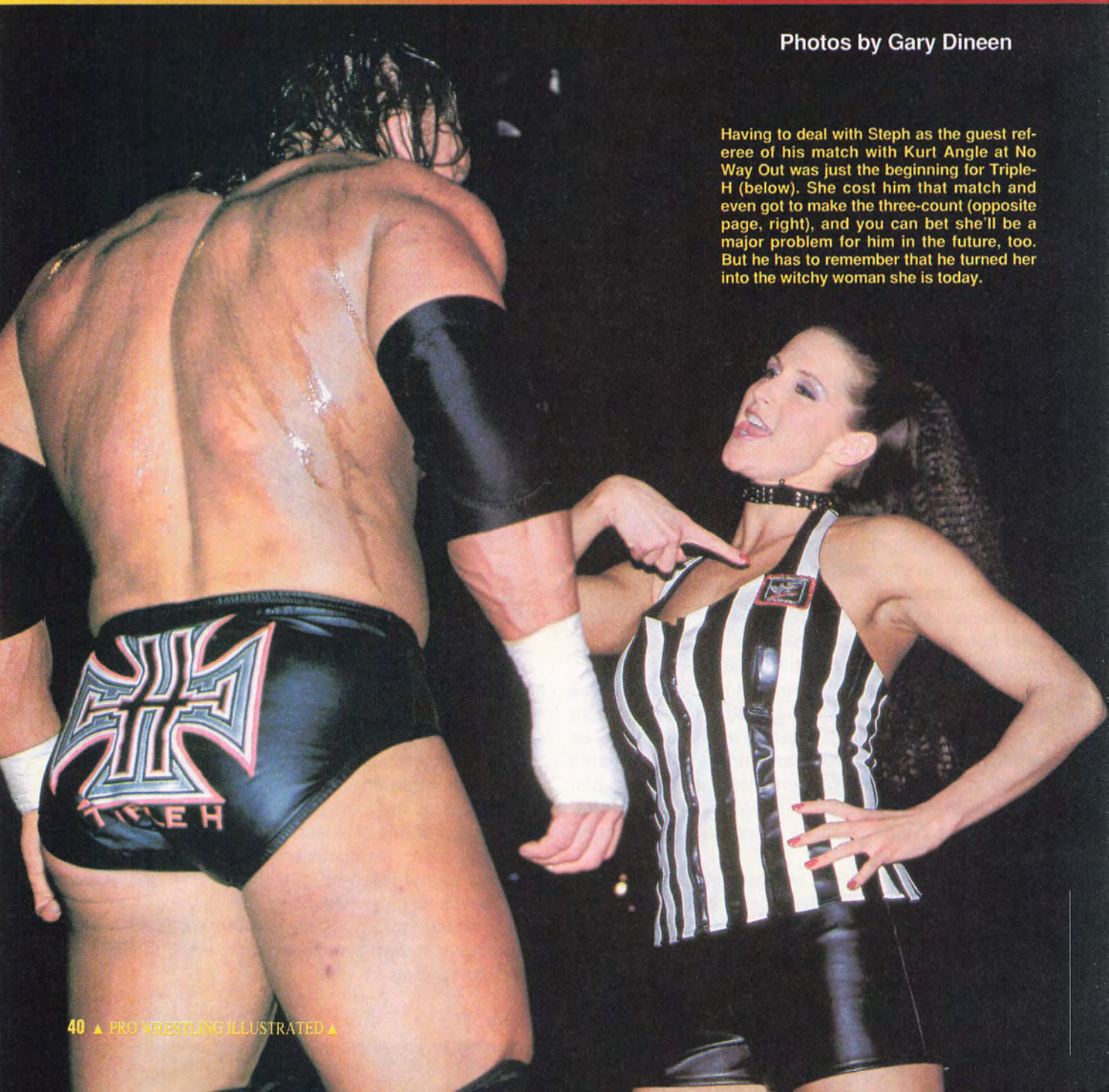
"Ron has all the tools a person needs to make it to the top level of this business," Cornette said. "He's got a good head on his shoulders, he's always willing to learn more, and when he gets angry, he's one of the most vicious men I've ever come across."

No, Waterman isn't Scott Steiner. He *is* the most dangerous unknown commodity in the WWF today.

But not for long. □

steph INFEC

Photos by Gary Dineen



Having to deal with Steph as the guest referee of his match with Kurt Angle at No Way Out was just the beginning for Triple-H (below). She cost him that match and even got to make the three-count (opposite page, right), and you can bet she'll be a major problem for him in the future, too. But he has to remember that he turned her into the witchy woman she is today.

T'ION!

How Can Triple-H Keep His Mind On His Game?

By Harry Burkett

"HERE I AM, only a couple of weeks from WrestleMania, and the WWF title is the last thing on my mind," confided Triple-H, running his fingers over his scalp and through his long hair. "Call me overconfident, but I can take Jericho on my worst day. It's the future that worries me, that's all. So what if I win the title! There's a bunch of guys in the WWF who will eat me alive if I'm not at my best. Austin, Rock, Angle, Hogan, Nash, Hall. Those are the ones I should be worried about, not a whiny little girl with a screechy voice and a bad boob job."

After taking a swig of spring water, he added, "Worrying about Stephanie, I don't know ... I don't know if it makes me better, more intense, or whether it's just draining the hell out of me."

Kurt Angle is hard enough to beat in a totally fair one-on-one encounter. If Steph is at ringside, if she's refereeing, if she's threatening to interfere—even if she's just in his head—Hunter is in big trouble, because chances are, he won't be at his best.

Stephanie McMahon has been Triple-H's muse for the past 30 months. In the beginning, Triple-H loved to torment her, ridiculing her all-American girl image, her father, and her relationship with Test. He was like the eighth-grade bully who made fun of the shy sixth-grade girl on the school bus. But, suddenly, the girl started to blossom into womanhood—and the bully didn't know what hit him.

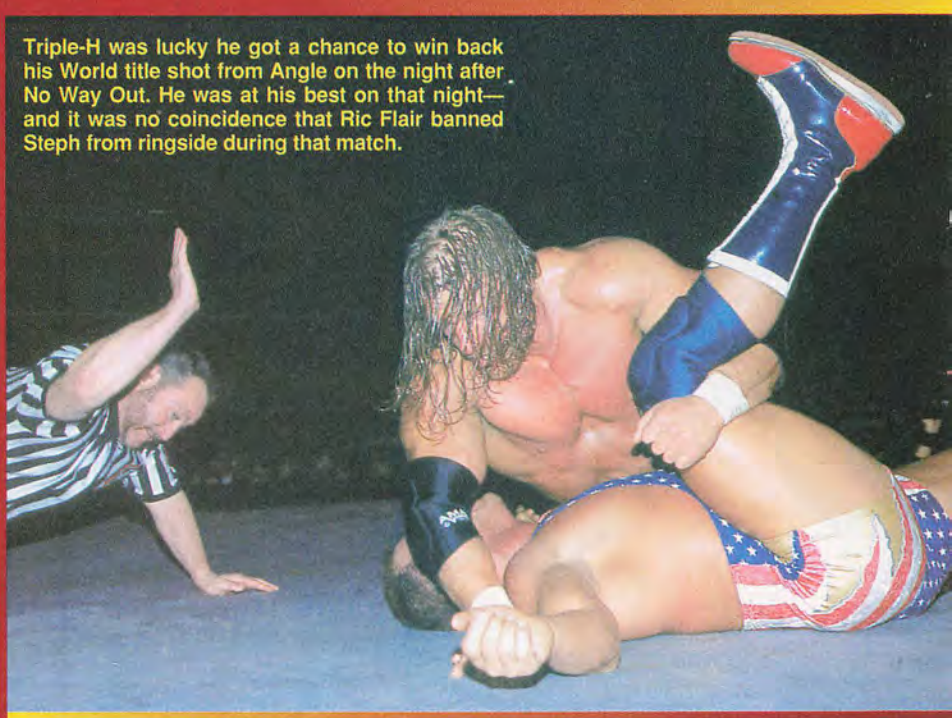
To the Triple-H of old, Stephanie didn't come of age until she betrayed her father. It happened in December 1999, when Vince McMahon was battling Triple-H in a streetfight to defend his daughter's honor. Stephanie shocked the entire McMahon family by celebrating with Triple-H after the match. At the time, Triple-H thought Stephanie had finally demonstrated maturity. He had convinced the once-naive Stephanie that the world was a cruel, heartless place in which people had to cheat and destroy others to survive.

Triple-H found strength in Stephanie because they espoused the same warped philosophy. Hunter's brutal brawn and blind ambition complemented Stephanie's spitefulness and corporate power, enabling them to reach their ultimate goal within a few weeks. Following Stephanie's betrayal of her father at Armageddon 1999, Vince abandoned his on-air role, Triple-H beat The Big Show for the World title, and the McMahon-Helmsley Era overtook the Federation.

Even when Stephanie had a supposedly innocent fling with Kurt Angle in mid-2000 and became his "business partner," Triple-H's jealousy didn't work against him. The challenge of reclaiming Stephanie, and the satisfaction of embarrassing Angle, made him a more aggressive and more effective WWF champ. He convinced Stephanie to hit Angle with a low blow in September 2000, enabling him to defeat the Olympian in a grudge match.

He had won over Stephanie again. She was the fuel for his ambition. Once Triple-H reached the top tier, it was his determination to please Stephanie that kept him there.

"Stephanie did serve that purpose, so you could say she was some kind of prize," admitted Helmsley. "Having Stephanie as my wife was a way of sticking it to Vince and Shane, and it gave me power I wouldn't have had otherwise. Before I came along, she was too naive to realize the power she



Triple-H was lucky he got a chance to win back his World title shot from Angle on the night after No Way Out. He was at his best on that night—and it was no coincidence that Ric Flair banned Steph from ringside during that match.

BREAKING UP IS EASY TO DO:
WRESTLING'S MOST VOLATILE COUPLES

Most Hollywood marriages don't last. Long-distance relationships don't last. Neither does any marriage to Elizabeth Taylor, Mike Tyson, or Larry King. Likewise, real marriages tend to get rocky under the sports entertainment spotlight, and made-for-wrestling couples tend to disintegrate faster than an Alka-Seltzer under Niagara Falls. Compared to some of these couples, the Helmsley marriage did remarkably well.

Jerry Lawler & Stacy Carter: Lawler's young love interest was a prominent figure in Memphis storylines from 1998 to 2000. Eventually, she joined Lawler in the WWF and became women's champion. When the WWF fired Stacy in February 2001, Lawler displayed his support by leaving with her. Then she left him.

Billy Kidman & Torrie Wilson: Torrie left Kidman for an older man, Shane Douglas. Kidman gained revenge by showing a videotape of a "dysfunctional" Douglas apologizing to Torrie in a hotel room. Oh, Kidman also distributed flyers of a teenage Torrie when she was supposedly fat. The "Kid-cam"—and WCW cameras—should have remained off during this sordid affair.

Kane & Tori: Beauty and the beast. Tori loved Kane, including his scars, mask, and electronic voice box. Then Kane's former friend X-Pac entered the picture. The result? X-Pac won Tori's services for 30 days due to a prematch stipulation. Somehow, X-Pac wooed Tori during that time and devastated Kane with the tawdry "X-Pac & Tori Christmas Story."

Marc Mero & Sable: Mero blew out his knee, then Sable snuffed out his career. At least that's the way Mero saw it. As Mero endured rehab, Sable parlayed her talents into a career more successful than her husband's. Mero was so jealous that he recruited Jacquelyn to feud with his wife. Mero still insisted that he was the more successful wrestler, but did he ever pose for *Playgirl*?

The Sandman & Lori Fullington: Some couples should leave their marital problems in the trailer park. Lori, sporting two black eyes and a homely plaid dress, appeared on ECW TV in 1996 and falsely accused her husband, The Sandman, of spousal abuse. She even convinced their young son, Tyler, to cane his father. Sandman and Lori eventually reconciled. TV champ Rhyno gored Sandman and Lori through a table in 2000.

Chris & Toni Adams: It was bad enough when Chris Adams' ex-wife, Jeannie Clark, aligned herself with his enemy, Steve Austin. It was even worse when his next wife, Toni, turned against him. Nicknamed "Toni The Tigress," she used kendo sticks on her husband several times. Toni adored the notoriety, holding kendo sticks while wearing skimpy outfits, and posing in bubble baths while wearing no outfits.

Randy Savage & Elizabeth: Savage, then WWF champ, turned against his wife and accused Hulk Hogan of "lusting after" her. Although their 1991 wedding was one of the greatest moments in SummerSlam history, Elizabeth gained revenge six years later. While in Savage's corner, she handed her shoe to Ric Flair, who used it to beat the "Macho Man" for the WCW title.

John Tatum & Missy Hyatt: There's nothing more obnoxious than someone horning in on a relationship. When Tatum and Hyatt jumped from World Class Wrestling to the UWF, Hyatt formed a "business partnership" with Eddie Gilbert. Vignettes depicted Gilbert squeezing ahead of Tatum to sit next to Hyatt in their limo. Soon, Hyatt and Hotstuff International was born. And it was Gilbert standing next to Hyatt in her wedding picture.

Tully Blanchard & Baby Doll: Was J.J. jealous? Manager James J. Dillon didn't like Baby Doll being Tully Blanchard's valet. He accused her of flying to Acapulco using Blanchard's credit cards. When Blanchard began slapping her around on TV, Dusty Rhodes rescued her. Wasn't it better getting slapped around?

Tully Blanchard with Baby Doll

Jim Garvin & Sunshine: She tolerated "Gorgeous" Jim Garvin's primping and preening. When Garvin lost a "winner's servant" match to David Von Erich, she even helped her man shovel manure at the Von Erich ranch. But she got tired of Garvin's manure when he hired an "assistant" for her, dubbed Sunshine II (Precious). Chris Adams and Sunshine defeated Garvin and Sunshine II in a loser-leaves-town match, forcing them out of World Class.

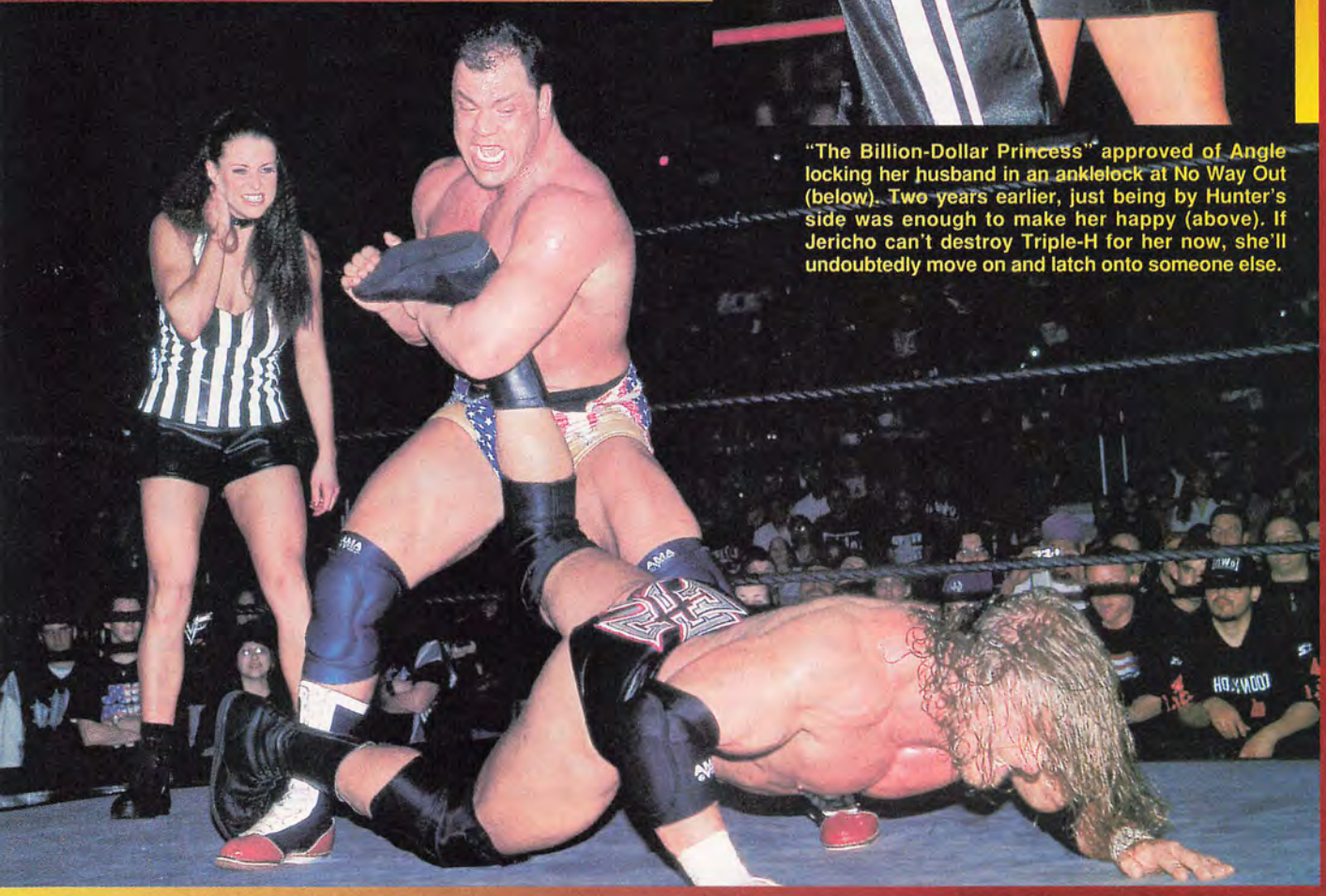
—Harry Burkett

had at her fingertips. Without me, she'd still be packing lunches for Brisco and Patterson."

Then came that fateful night in May 2001. Triple-H and Steve Austin were defending the World tag team title against Chris Benoit and Chris Jericho. Late in the match, "The Game" lunged toward Jericho and tore his quadriceps muscle, which sidelined him for seven-plus months and cost Helmsley and Austin the belts. Stephanie was a supportive partner, and her eyes were flushed with tears as Triple-H underwent surgery.

"I won't deny there were some genuine feelings there," said Triple-H. "It's impossible to be together for that damn long, whether it was a marriage of convenience or not, and not have feelings. But Steph was the one who started the problems. She bragged, on television, that she was responsible for my success. If she had said we both were responsible for each other's success, that would've been different. But she said it again and again, like she was trying to make some point to me and to the rest of the world.

"Believe it or not, I had an easier time handling the Angle thing. At least with Angle, I could get in the ring and kick his ass, and prove to Steph who was the better man. But how can I convince her that



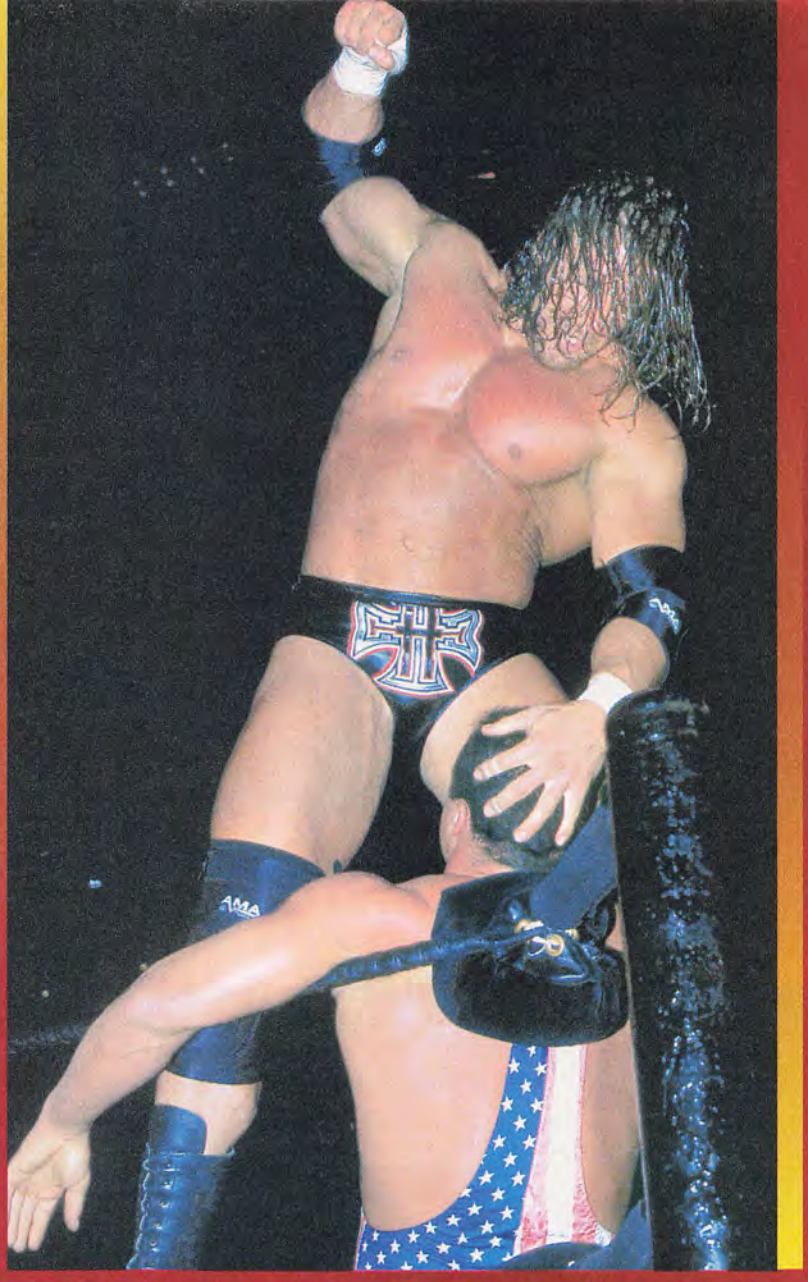
"The Billion-Dollar Princess" approved of Angle locking her husband in an anklelock at No Way Out (below). Two years earlier, just being by Hunter's side was enough to make her happy (above). If Jericho can't destroy Triple-H for her now, she'll undoubtedly move on and latch onto someone else.

'How can I convince her that I was an equal partner in our relationship or that I was equally responsible for our success? I can't. I fed her ego for so long and gave her so much power on a silver platter that she's no longer in touch with reality. I created a monster.'

I was an equal partner in our relationship or that I was equally responsible for our success? I can't. I fed her ego for so long and gave her so much power on a silver platter that she's no longer in touch with reality. I created a monster."

This is the part that Triple-H can't get out of his mind. He is responsible for the person Stephanie has become. He turned Stephanie into a conniving, ruthless wench in order to advance his own career. In the meantime, however, Triple-H has changed. Being forced to watch *Raw* and *Smackdown* at home for seven months, instead of being part of the action, gave him a renewed respect for the business and the people in it. Seven months of rehabilitation, barely able to extend his leg for several weeks, made him more sensitive toward others' vulnerabilities.

Never again could Triple-H brag about using a sledgehammer to rob another wrestler of his livelihood. He could never inflict that kind of pain on a person again, either physically or mentally. Stephanie is not to blame for the breakup of her marriage. She didn't change. Triple-H did.



At least Helmsley recognizes that his ex-wife-to-be is going to be a problem for him. But he insists he will be the one responsible for her downfall. A number of other WWF wrestlers have made similar boasts in the last two years, though. And she will be just as determined to ruin him as he is to ruin her.

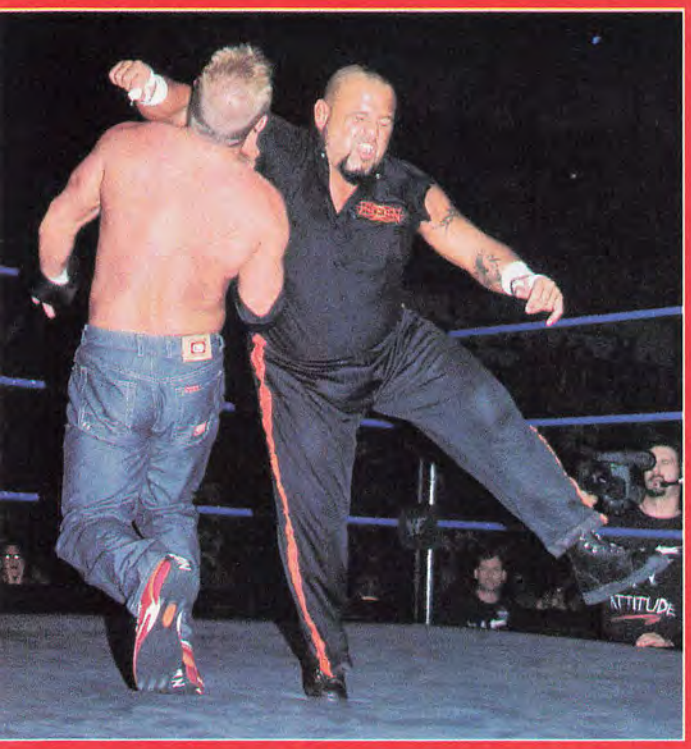
All the emotions of a love gone bad are now plaguing Triple-H: Anger, hurt, resentment, and, yes, affection are forcing his attention upon Stephanie, not Chris Jericho, Steve Austin, The Rock, or the WWF title.

But Triple-H's emotions go even further. He feels a tremendous sense of guilt. If it weren't for him, Stephanie might be helping out backstage, or, more likely, she would be learning the business alongside her mother, Linda. She might be happily married to Test or someone else. She might have remained a nice person. Triple-H did her wrong.

And Triple-H betrayed Stephanie a second time when he returned to the WWF this year. After turning her into the devious shrew she is today, he rejected her like a piece of dysfunctional trash. That has damaged her psyche to such an irreparable extent that she can never be sweet little Stephanie again. He destroyed her innocence, then abandoned his creation.

"Don't give me that," said Triple-H. "I helped Stephanie stand up to her father and take her rightful place in the company. I didn't force her to lie about pregnancies or start hanging around people who've treated her like garbage, namely Jericho. I won't be responsible for Stephanie's insecurities ... just her downfall."

Seven months on the sidelines restored enough humanity in Triple-H for him to see the error of his ways. Until Triple-H takes responsibility for Stephanie's behavior, he won't be able to fulfill his potential as a WWF superstar or a human being. □



Tazz' confidence is on display as he drops Scotty Too Hotty with a powerful clothesline. Heck, both Tazz and Spike had reason to be confident after they upset The Dudley Boyz for the WWF World tag title and defended the belts numerous times. Did they get too confident ... maybe even obsessed with proving they were worthy champs?

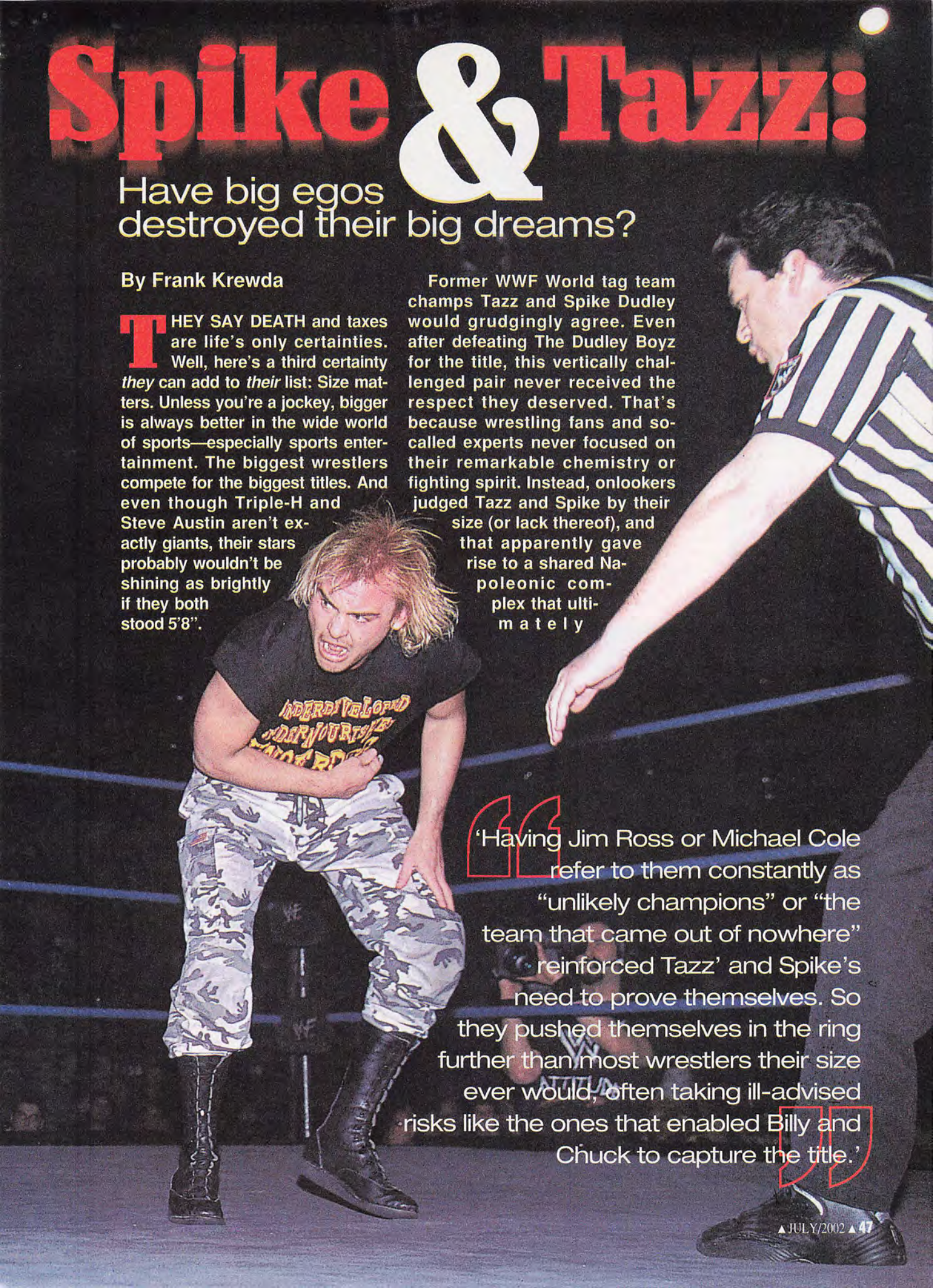
Spike & Tazz:

Have big egos destroyed their big dreams?

By Frank Krewda

THEY SAY DEATH and taxes are life's only certainties. Well, here's a third certainty *they* can add to *their* list: Size matters. Unless you're a jockey, bigger is always better in the wide world of sports—especially sports entertainment. The biggest wrestlers compete for the biggest titles. And even though Triple-H and Steve Austin aren't exactly giants, their stars probably wouldn't be shining as brightly if they both stood 5'8".

Former WWF World tag team champs Tazz and Spike Dudley would grudgingly agree. Even after defeating The Dudley Boyz for the title, this vertically challenged pair never received the respect they deserved. That's because wrestling fans and so-called experts never focused on their remarkable chemistry or fighting spirit. Instead, onlookers judged Tazz and Spike by their size (or lack thereof), and that apparently gave rise to a shared Napoleonic complex that ultimately



"'Having Jim Ross or Michael Cole refer to them constantly as "unlikely champions" or "the team that came out of nowhere" reinforced Tazz' and Spike's need to prove themselves. So they pushed themselves in the ring further than most wrestlers their size ever would, often taking ill-advised risks like the ones that enabled Billy and Chuck to capture the title.'"

ended their run as champs.

"Instead of channeling all their energies toward a successful title reign, I believe Tazz and Spike grew obsessed with showing the wrestling world that their relatively small stature was no obstacle to keeping those belts," said esteemed wrestling psychologist Dr. Sidney M. Basil. It was an obsession born from several factors, according to Dr. Basil. Foremost was the WWF's consistent portrayal of Tazz and Spike as consummate underdogs. Honestly, few associated with the sport ever expected Tazz and Spike to knock off The Dudley Boyz, much less hold the straps for six weeks.

Even when he's in the ring with a fellow light heavyweight such as Christian, Spike is giving up about 75 pounds. Let's hope for his sake—and the sake of Tazz if they choose to team in the future—that he realizes that there's a reason he's called an underdog in almost every match he takes in the WWF.

"But having Jim Ross or Michael Cole refer to them constantly as 'unlikely champions' or 'the team that came out of nowhere' reinforced Tazz' and Spike's need to prove themselves," opined Basil. "So they pushed themselves in the ring further than most wrestlers their size ever would, often taking ill-advised risks like the ones that enabled Billy and Chuck to capture the title."

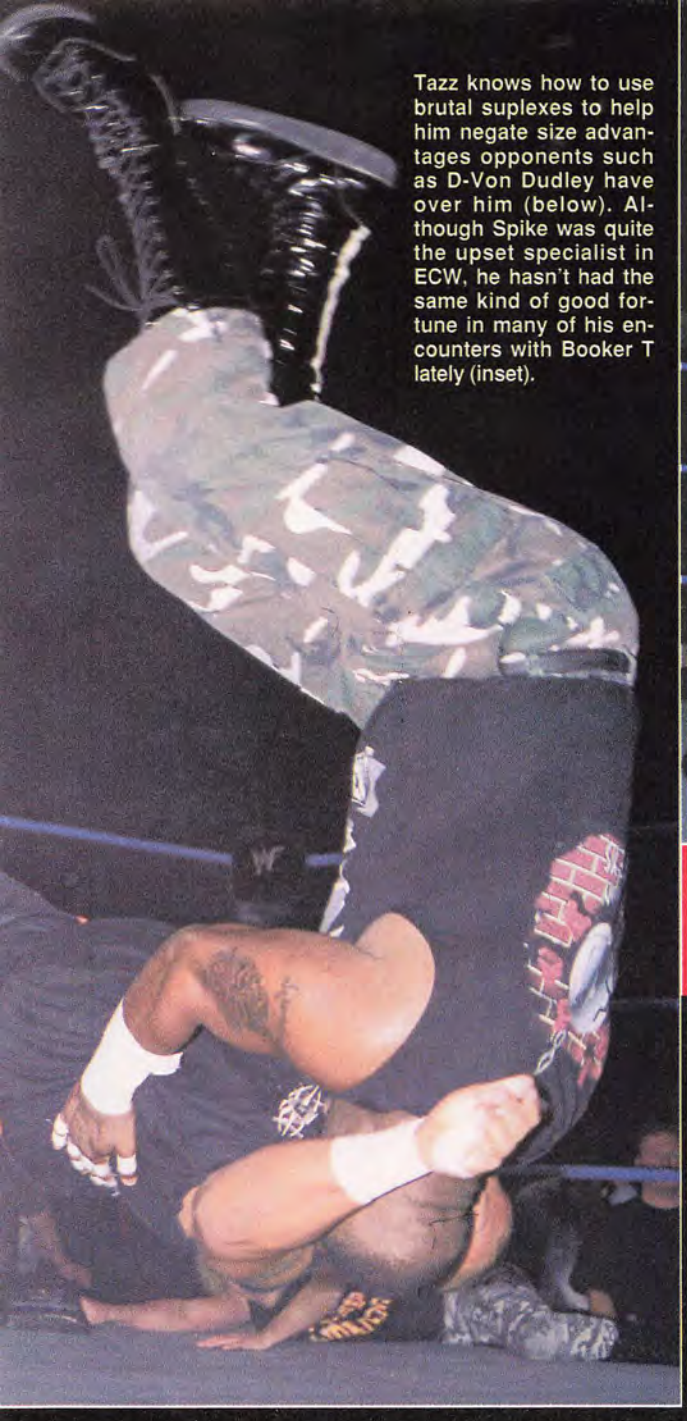
Another contributing factor to Tazz' and Spike's downfall was their previous success in ECW. Both men carried a larger-than-life reputation with them to the WWF. Tazz gained fame for being a no-nonsense thug and a strong ECW World champion, Spike for absorbing unspeakable amounts of physical abuse at the hands of larger opponents and still coming back to upset many of them.

No doubt their reps served them well in ECW, where they frequently faced talent that was a bit less formidable and experienced than Austin and Triple-H. But in the WWF, where they wrestle bigger, faster, and stronger opponents every day, Tazz' and Spike's reputations have proven much less useful. Even worse: Dr. Sid suspects both wrestlers are guilty of reading their own press clippings.

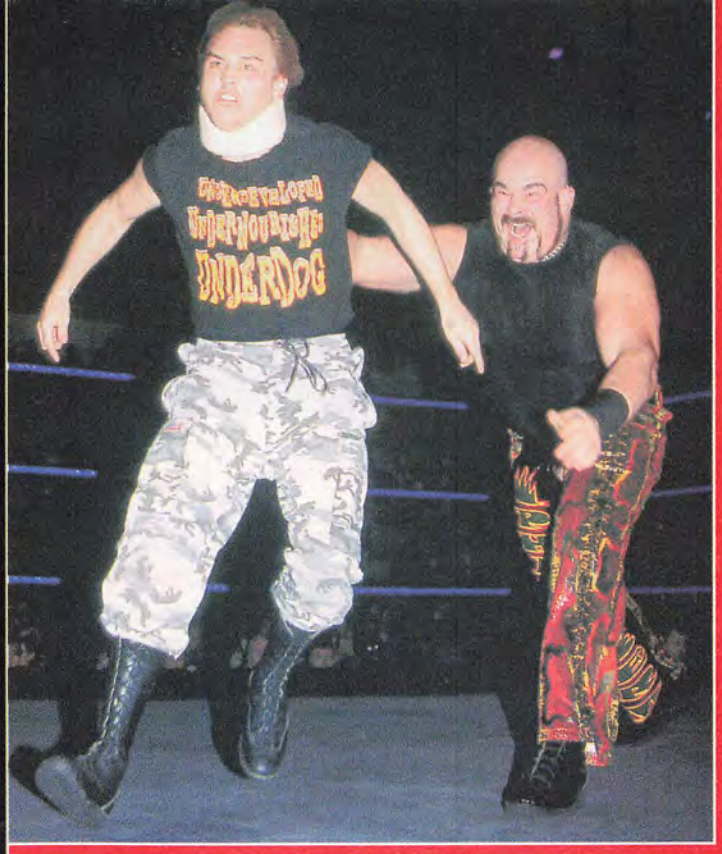
"There's no doubt Tazz and Spike were 'giant killers' in ECW," he said. "Unfortunately, they may have bought into those labels. The consequences can be disastrous once the ante is upped. Quite frankly, both men would have done better by making a less conspicuous entrance into the WWF."

That, however, was difficult for Tazz and Spike, considering the success both men experienced so soon after joining the WWF. Tazz ended Kurt Angle's winning streak in decisive fashion, and Spike found himself wrestling for the WWF World title against Steve Austin in a TV main event just months after his arrival. These accomplishments understandably fed their egos all the more. Sadly, their success proved to be fool's gold, according to Dr. Basil.

"Think of Tazz and Spike as gambling addicts," Dr. Basil said. "Each jackpot win pays off immediately. But in the long run, winning only reinforces their destruc-



Tazz knows how to use brutal suplexes to help him negate size advantages opponents such as D-Von Dudley have over him (below). Although Spike was quite the upset specialist in ECW, he hasn't had the same kind of good fortune in many of his encounters with Booker T lately (inset).



Spike's T-shirt says a lot: We're not sure about him being underdeveloped and undernourished, but he is an underdog, and most people do respect him for what he has accomplished. There was nothing wrong with people calling him an unlikely champion in the WWF. It was not a knock.

tive behavior. That ultimately prevents them holding on to something more meaningful. Their early fortunes rendered Tazz and Spike unable to hold on to that tag team title."

Not so fast, says noted egotist Shawn Michaels. "I was a small guy by wrestling standards and I beat men like Nash, 'Taker, and Hall," he said. "And it was that 'look-at-me' mentality that helped me do it. You have to believe you're bigger than life if you're undersized, especially in the WWF. You have to jack yourself up. Wrestlers like Kane and The Big Show will chew you up and spit you out. Tazz and Spike have to have big egos; otherwise they'll get destroyed."

In fairness to Michaels (not to mention Tazz and Spike), Tazz and Spike are obligated to themselves and each other to win each time they enter a wrestling ring. If winning entails pumping up their egos as well as their bodies, then Tazz and Spike have every right to do whatever it takes. No wrestler in the ultra-competitive WWF can afford to lose matches today for a bigger payoff down the road—no matter how big his ego is.

Besides, WWF matchmakers did their level best to knock Tazz down a peg or two, often by setting him up for humiliation at the hands of Austin. Even Spike had his momentum squashed when he banged up a previously injured leg. Take into account the obstacles both men have overcome, and you could say both deserve another shot at success, i.e. the tag title.

"That's true," Dr. Basil admitted. "Everyone is entitled to feel good about his accomplishments. However, when feeling good interferes with the task at hand, like I think it did with Tazz and Spike, then one must learn to walk away to fight another day—even if doing so hurts the ego. Make no mistake, that's what ruined Spike and Tazz: They believed in themselves a little too much. These two have the talent and desire to rise to the top again; they just have to decide if they're willing to start over as a team with a new approach ... or simply move on with their careers separately." □

the business page

By Harry Burkett

WWFE and DirecTV call a truce ... The four-month standoff between WWFE and the largest satellite service provider in the United States ended on February 7, when both companies announced a new deal that will be in effect until August 2003. WWF pay-per-views became available to DirecTV's 10.7 million customers again beginning with No Way Out.

The original agreement had expired in January 2001, but WWFE had continued airing its pay-per-views via DirecTV under the old terms while negotiating a new contract. The two companies reached a stalemate last October, and No Mercy became the first PPV to be "blacked out."

The sticking point: The WWF's assertion that it should receive a higher percentage of revenue for PPV events purchased on the satellite network because, unlike the cable companies, DirecTV does not have the expense of marketing events through a distributor.

According to published reports, DirecTV caved to the WWF's demands. No Way Out, airing February 17, became the first PPV to be broadcast on DirecTV under the new deal. It was clearly a good time for both sides to work out a deal. That's was the show on which the NWO made its WWF debut, and early indications suggest it did very well. DirecTV was also expected to continue carrying the Fanatic Series, beginning with March's *Before They Were Superstars,* which takes a close look at various WWF wrestlers before they hit the big time.

As of yet, it is still unclear exactly how much money WWFE and DirecTV lost during the four-month blackout.

Nash wants the cash ... Kevin Nash helped to establish the New World Order, The Outsiders, and the Wolfpac as trend-setting cliques—and as lucrative marketing concepts. Now he wants to be paid for it.

According to the *Fulton County Daily Report,* Nash is suing the Universal Wrestling Corporation, the legal entity that continued paying him fat checks on behalf of AOL Time Warner after the WWF purchased WCW. He claims he is owed royalties for the use of his name, image, and persona. Nash also takes credit for the development of his character, along with devising specific themes and routines. The suit was filed in Fulton County's Georgia State Court.

The complaint charges that WCW "engaged in a systematic pattern and practice designed to avoid paying the professional wrestlers millions of dollars in royalties." Many contracts had granted a percentage of merchandising and licensing revenues to individual wrestlers, along with compensation for intellectual property. Allegedly, WCW had refused to furnish records to determine the correct percentages of revenue.

At least one of Nash's lawyers is preparing suits on behalf of other stars. AOL Time Warner had not responded publicly to the suit as of press time.

The WWF breaks into record stores ... How many times have you thought of ZZ Top's classic song "Legs" when Stacy Keibler walked to the ring so seductively? Here's good news: Kid Rock performs an updated version of

Kevin Nash proudly wears his NWO Wolfpac T-shirt as he poses with the WCW World title belt before a match in 1998. "Big Sexy" contends that the Universal Wrestling Corporation, the legal entity created by AOL Time Warner to handle old WCW business matters after the company was sold, still owes him money; he has filed a lawsuit as a result.

Stacy Keibler's got legs, and she sure knows how to use them. Look for an updated version of the ZZ Top classic "Legs" on Smackdown Records' new Forceable Entry CD. It features entrance music for all the WWF's top performers.

the song on *Forceable Entry,* a joint release from Smackdown Records and Columbia Records. Keibler's new entrance theme is one of 18 tracks on the compact disc featuring the top performers in contemporary "aggro-rock."

Canadian band Our Lady Peace performs a new entrance theme for Chris Benoit, Breaking Point does Rob Van Dam, and Cypress Hill does Tazz. Drowning Pool—not Motorhead—plays "The Game" this time, while Disturbed, Limp Bizkit, and Rob Zombie venture into familiar territory with tracks for Steve Austin, The Undertaker, and Edge, respectively. In addition, Sevendust does their version of "Break The Walls Down" for Chris Jericho, and Saliva performs the very aptly titled "Turn The Tables" for The Dudley Boyz.

Also on the CD, the WWF unveils the new themes for its two primary television programs. Marilyn Manson does a remix of "The Beautiful People," which will be featured on *Smackdown,* and The Union Underground's "Across The Nation" will replace *Raw's* "Thorn In Your Eye," which debuted on *WWF Full Metal: The Album* in 1995.

More on Bischoff's new reality ... As you've probably read in "Ringside" on page 12, Eric Bischoff does, indeed, have a major project underway. The former WCW president, who has actively competed in karate and kickboxing, is negotiating to produce a new reality TV series based on martial arts competition.

If Bischoff were to gain *Survivor* Executive Producer Mark Burnett's assistance in the production and promotion of the show, it could become a viable property at the outset. The competition would be similar to the Ultimate Fighting Championship, featuring a mixture of kung fu, judo, tae kwon do, karate, and kickboxing. It would debut with male contestants, with a female lineup added if the program became successful.

Bischoff's prior involvement in pro wrestling and *Battledome* should serve him well in this new venture.

WWFE Stockwatch

(For the period of February 1-28)

30-Day High: 14.28 on February 1
30-Day Low: 12.81 on February 21
52-Week High: 14.46 on January 31, 2002
52-Week Low: 10.31 on September 17, 2001

WWFE stock took a hit on February 21 when the company announced its third-quarter earnings were down by 20 percent compared to the same quarter last year. The stock rallied within a few days, however, amid news of an economic recovery, an improving forecast for WWFE advertising revenues, and pre-WrestleMania hype.

The third-quarter report also revealed that net income had dropped from 16 to 13 cents per share since last year. And, although WWFE had increased the number of live events to 61, up 13 from the same quarter the previous year, total attendance had fallen by nearly a half-million.

Total revenue for the third quarter was $100-million, down from $111-million during the same time last year. Net profit fell from $11.7-million to $9.4-million. Fallout from the September 11 terrorist attacks continued as WWF New York revenue dropped to $3.9-million, down 15 percent.

Despite the declining figures, WWFE has fared very well during the recession, which most experts believe is nearly over. The discretionary income of young people was only moderately affected in the recent downturn, helping WWFE to continue netting profits while many media companies suffered losses.

TV breakdown

Week beginning February 4

Raw (TNN): 4.5

Analysis: Jazz went through Trish Stratus and planted her with a fisherman buster to capture the women's title, and World champion Chris Jericho teamed with The Undertaker to beat Steve Austin and The Rock in the main event. But the show will be remembered for Vince McMahon's announcement of the NWO's debut at No Way Out, and Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley telling Triple-H she was pregnant.

Smackdown (UPN): 4.1

Analysis: The Rock called out The Undertaker, but Booker T answered the challenge. Booker fared no better in this *Smackdown* opener than he did in the main event of SummerSlam. Maven signed his death certificate (Undertaker's words) by upsetting "The American Badass" for the hardcore title, and Vince McMahon punished Triple-H by pitting him against WWF champ Chris Jericho and Kurt Angle in a handicap match. Triple-H lost.

Excess (TNN): 1.0

Sunday Night Heat (MTV): 1.4

Week beginning February 11

Raw (TNN): 4.4

Analysis: Linda McMahon informed Triple-H by telephone that Stephanie wasn't really pregnant; she had hired an actor to play her doctor in an effort to trick "The Game" into renewing their marriage vows. The groom entered the ring to his usual entrance theme, and "What?!" chants disrupted the ceremony. Despite the hideously awful singers, the segment was vastly entertaining and full of drama.

Smackdown (UPN): 3.9

Analysis: In the opening segment, Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley vowed to destroy her husband, and Vince McMahon booked him in a tag team match against Kurt Angle and The Undertaker—with Maven as Triple-H's partner. Angle hit Helmsley with a chair, causing a disqualification. Chris Jericho used a DQ to save his undisputed championship by smacking Kane with a title belt.

Excess (TNN): 0.9

Sunday Night Heat (MTV): 1.4

Week beginning February 18

Raw (TNN): 4.7

Analysis: The anticipated boost from the NWO's debut at No Way Out was almost non-existent. In fact, *Raw*'s rating was no higher than the usual number following recent PPVs. Did Hulk Hogan, Scott Hall, and Kevin Nash turn off as many viewers as they attracted? Nevertheless, Hogan's in-ring showdown with The Rock was one of the most dramatic moments in *Raw* history ... and his driving of a semi truck into Rock's ambulance will be remembered for years.

Smackdown (UPN): 4.5

Analysis: Unlike *Raw*, *Smackdown* experienced a significant ratings increase, probably due to the NWO's presence. Obviously, the dramatic entry of the NWO that fans expected at No Way Out didn't happen until *Raw*—and *Smackdown* benefited from it. But the WWF failed to capitalize on the NWO's strength—unbridled savagery—when it had Steve Austin tie Scott Hall in a chair and treat him like a helpless weakling.

Excess (TNN): 0.8

Sunday Night Heat (MTV): 1.6

Week beginning February 25

Raw (TNN): 4.7

Analysis: The Undertaker wished Ric Flair a happy birthday by brutalizing Flair's best friend, WWF official Arn Anderson, eventually leading to the signing of a UT-Flair clash at WrestleMania X-8. World champion Chris Jericho beat Kurt Angle in the next-to-last match, while Steve Austin defeated Curt Hennig in the main event. Isn't Jericho capable of a one-on-one main event? He is the undisputed champion, after all.

Smackdown (UPN): 3.8

Analysis: This edition was a good buildup to the premiere of *Tough Enough 2*, which aired immediately following *Smackdown* on MTV. *Tough Enough 1* winner Maven retained the hardcore title against Goldust, then lost it to the bizarre one in a subsequent segment backstage. Trainer Al Snow lost to The Undertaker by disqualification. *Smackdown* dropped a staggering seven-tenths of a point this week.

Excess (TNN): 0.7

Sunday Night Heat (MTV): 1.5

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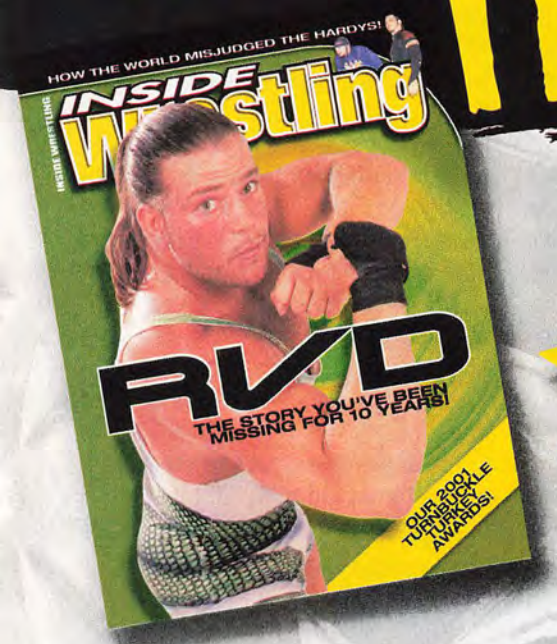
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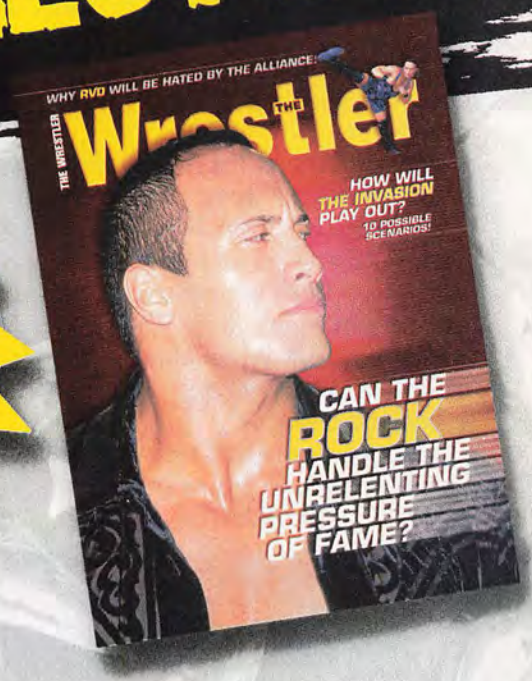
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the steel cage

By Liz Hunter

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE NWO? At No Way Out, Hulk Hogan said that he, Scott Hall, and Kevin Nash just wanted "to make the WWF better." Maybe he was actually being honest.

The group has made the WWF better, at least in terms of revenue, and star power. I believe driving a semi truck into an ambulance containing The Rock will generate interest, not turn people away. The NWO T-shirt sales at WrestleMania X-8 alone ought to be enough to justify the group's presence.

My guess is the NWO storyline will reach a new level following WrestleMania. The novelty of having Hogan, Hall, and Nash around will wear off quickly, and the NWO will have to recruit new members to sustain momentum. Rob Van Dam and X-Pac are prime candidates.

The storyline should be incorporated into the WWF split, with the NWO invading—or maybe becoming—one of the promotions. Perhaps Ric Flair will cut away his 50 percent of the company in order to save it from the NWO cancer. If the WWF does it correctly, events should become even more interesting after WrestleMania.

LETTER TO LIZ. Speaking of potential NWO recruits, reader and admirer R.M. Rodriguez asks about the whereabouts of two former WCW stars in this letter.

"I'm an avid reader of *PWI* and a huge fan of wrestling. To start out with, I was a big fan of the NWA/WCW and was grief-stricken as it went down the tubes. Jim Ross hints at Scott Steiner on wwf.com, and I'm wondering about Sting. Will either of these men go to the WWF?"

Steiner would be a perfect candidate to join Hogan, Hall, and Nash, and I think he probably will. He was sidelined due to injuries for most of 2001 and seemed hindered by his drop-foot syndrome during his first matches with the WWA in December. But sources suggest Steiner is capable of contributing to the WWF.

Steve Borden, however, has more important priorities, as he discussed on Ted DiBiase's Web site, milliondollarman.com. "I've been so busy being a husband and a father, and Sue (Borden's wife) and I are pursuing real estate," he said. "With all of that, plus home schooling a couple days a week—it's all a lot of time."

Steve Borden would rather have a decent family life than fight the NWO this time. It sounds like a reasonable notion to me.

That's Steve Borden sans Sting face paint with Kimberly Page at a 2000 charity event. Don't look for Sting to reapply the face paint and come after the NWO again in 2002. The man has other priorities in his life.

SUPER ACTION AT THE SUPER 8. Or so I'm told. Harry Burkett was supposed to give me a ride to the Super 8, but my neighbor, Chi-Chi (she's a Latin gal), was suffering from a terrible case of the flu and I volunteered to play nursemaid at the last minute. Former All Pro Wrestling standout and new Pro Wrestling NOAH recruit Donovan Morgan won this year's eight-man tournament, defeating A.J. Styles in the scintillating final.

Burkett, Dave Lenker, Brandi Mankiewicz, Will Welsh, and Art Director Greg Stevens—all of whom at-

Pepper Parks (left) was eventual 2002 Super 8 winner Donovan Morgan's victim in the first round of the tourney. Too bad Liz Hunter wasn't able to see that in person. She'll have to read about it in detail in next month's Supercards issue of *PWI*.

tended the event in Wilmington, Delaware—agreed it was the usual high-flying spectacle, but the actual maneuvers were more innovative than ever. First, there was the Styles clash. Styles positions his opponent as if for a pedigree, but reaches down and pulls up his opponent's body into almost a piledriver position while hooking the man's arms around his legs, leaving his face and torso completely exposed for a devastating drop to the canvas.

Photos of some of Morgan's moves are beyond description. Think brainbusters, piledrivers, and Michinoku drivers ... just more frightening. I think first-round casualty Pepper Parks is still unconscious in Wilmington. Look for our Super 8 feature in the next issue of *PWI*.

By the way, Harry, I heard you received my refreshment pass (the press has its perks). You owe me a slice of pizza.

(Liz Hunter can be reached via e-mail at SuperstarLizH@yahoo.com.) □

strange list of the month

FIVE THINGS THAT INSPIRED MARK HENRY TO WIN THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN CONTEST

1. The idea that he could rejoin Ohio Valley Wrestling's Bolin Services clique
2. The chance to impress Mae Young
3. The prospect of grabbing The Big Show's spot in the WWF
4. The illusion that Jim Ross was serious about wanting him back "real soon"
5. The six-course meal waiting for him at the hotel

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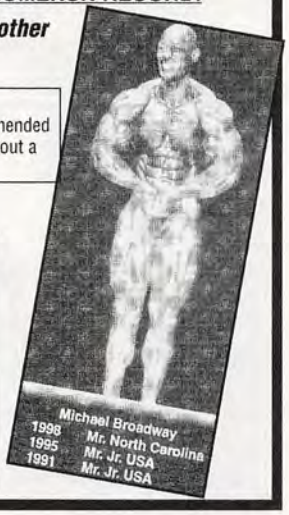
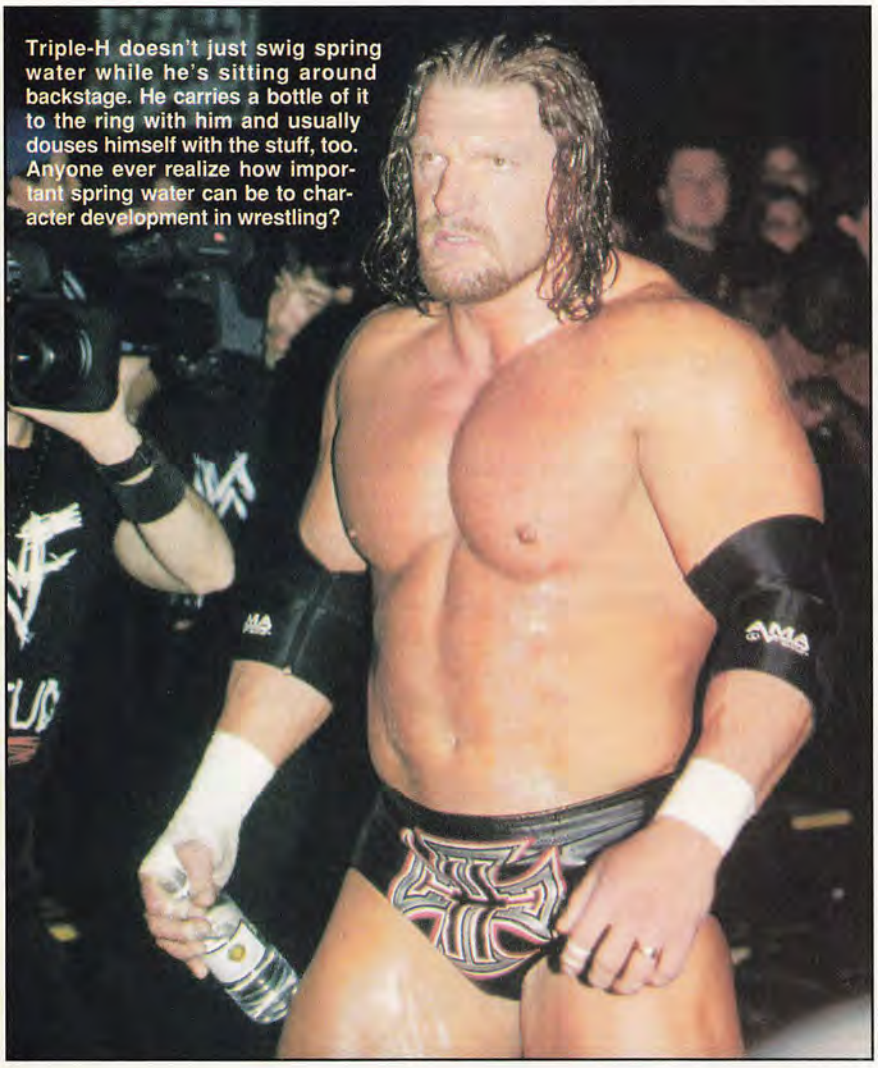


win, lose, or draw

By Harry Burkett

YOU'VE SEEN THE techniques. The limousine arrives at the back of the building. You're thinking, *Wow, that means someone important is in that limousine, and something important might happen later.* Or how about this one? A wrestler becomes violently angry, usually the result of being cheated on pay-per-view the previous night, and challenges his enemy to a fight. The same wrestler lunges for his adversary, cops swarm the ring, and he's hauled off to jail.

This storytelling device gets that superstar out of the way that evening because his villainous rival will wreak havoc in his absence. But that doesn't necessarily cause viewers to switch channels. There's always the possibility of that superstar being released on his own recognizance and kicking the other guy's butt during the final two minutes of the program.



Triple-H doesn't just swig spring water while he's sitting around backstage. He carries a bottle of it to the ring with him and usually douses himself with the stuff, too. Anyone ever realize how important spring water can be to character development in wrestling?

Steve Austin has been released on his own recognizance at least a half-dozen times. Aren't these police departments linked to a central computer? Surely, if anyone glanced at Austin's growing criminal record, he'd be incarcerated indefinitely. For that matter, I don't understand why cops would allow other people—whether it's Scott Hall, Kurt Angle, or The Undertaker—to taunt and make faces at the accused—whether it's Austin, Triple-H, or Ric Flair—as they're being placed in squad cars.

Here's a question for all of you who always pay attention to detail: What are WWF superstars doing nearly every time someone enters their dressing rooms? That's right, they're talking on their cell phones. As if it's not bad enough that the top-tier wrestlers don't arrive until halfway through the program in their fancy limousines. They're spending all their time backstage talking to people on the phone. To whom is The Rock always talking when a rival enters his dressing room, his eyes get real big, he pauses, and, in hushed tones, tells the other person, "I'll call you later ... I've got business to take care of"?

Is it his wife? His agent? A movie producer? Or is it *Entertainment Tonight?* It seems to me that Rock should be preparing for his matches, especially when live television cameras are roaming around.

Ric Flair is another person always talking on his cell phone. That's a bit more forgivable because I assume that Flair, as WWF co-owner, has pressing matters to discuss with Federation executives and officials. And Flair doesn't have to prepare for matches. I'm sure Vince McMahon, even off-camera, is on his cell phone much of the time.

That would be fine if I didn't suspect that Flair was WWF co-owner only on Monday and Tuesday/Thursday nights, plus one Sunday

evening per month. The cell phone is an innocent prop, a device to give the impression that co-owners and superstars lead important lives. Plus, in this telecommunications age, talking on a cell phone is a very chic activity. If *Raw* and *Smackdown* aired in the 1950s, these same superstars would be smoking cigarettes and sipping martinis. In that sense, Bradshaw and Faarooq are real throwbacks. Cigars and playing cards are 1940s props.

Triple-H has utilized almost every cliched prop. Guzzling spring water makes him cool *and* healthy at the same time, munching on celery and carrots with Stephanie demonstrated his affluence, and, of course, the limousine drive-up is a Triple-H specialty. No, the use of a Motorhead entrance theme for a wedding, and his parody of Michael Buffer's "Are you ready ..." routine are not among the props I'm writing about. They're more into the realm of gimmicks. Props are more subtle, less original, and their lack of individuality ensures they can be used by anyone pretending to be a superstar.

Think of these props as "coolness enhancements." And don't assume these props are the exclusive domains of WWF superstars. Fans can use these props in their everyday lives. In fact, many people already do.

Here's a true story. My best friend wasn't having much luck picking up women. He completely solved this problem by the use of props. He joined the YMCA, didn't do much exercising, quite frankly, but just walked around a lot ... with two crucial props in hand. My friend always carried a cell phone with him, and whenever a woman looked his way, he pretended to be in deep conversation. *He must be really interesting for the other person to keep him on the phone so long,* she thinks. Or he must be very important if the other person has to call him at the gym.

Prop number two: spring water. When my friend got tired of talking, he took a careless sip of water. One, that means he's cool. Two, that means he's healthy. Three, the fact that he's drinking water while the other person is talking proves he is the more fascinating of the two. I know this guy sounds like George Costanza from *Seinfeld,* but he swears these techniques work. A flip of the phone, a swig of the water, and he's bagged a babe.

I realize that sounds incredibly sexist. While I'm sure the more discriminating women paid no attention to his props, I'm also sure that a significant number of bottom feeders were impressed. The same is true with wrestling. The social props work; otherwise we wouldn't see them so much.

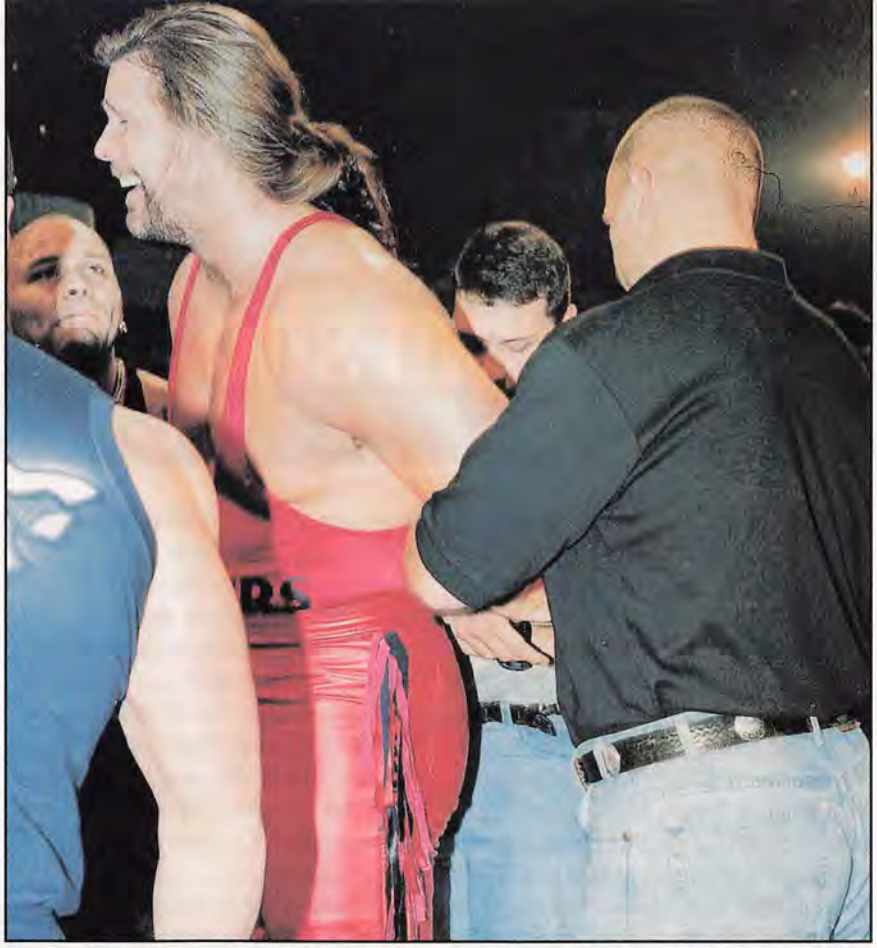
But I caution the many high school kids reading this magazine. The spring water, cell phones, and limousines (if you can get them!) are harmless. The more wrestling-specific props and devices get dicey, however.

Pumping up your stereo with the same song (as in your personal entrance theme) every time you enter the school parking lot can be obnoxious. If you're asked questions in class, don't tell your teachers to shut up and then start asking them questions (as in terrorizing announcers during promos—also known as the "Cole-Coachman Rebuke"). Don't end all of your conversations with the same sentence (as in developing your own catchphrase).

If you play football or some other sport, and you happen to break your leg, cut yourself the hard way, or are just knocked silly, please do not refuse medical treatment. Turning against the paramedics won't earn you any friends. And, most importantly, if someone from the opposing team is carried out on a stretcher, do not—repeat, *do not*—flip him off of it.

You should exercise caution when using wrestling's storytelling techniques in everyday life. They'll get stale even faster.

(Harry Burkett can be reached via e-mail at HBurkettJr@excite.com.) □



Kevin Nash was the victim of the arrest routine in WCW a few times. Perhaps he'll have the same experience in the WWF that Steve Austin has had at least a half-dozen times. There are probably too many of these "arrests" made on wrestling shows.

the straight shooter

By Dan Murphy

WOULD IT BE journalistically irresponsible for me to do this column on anything other than the NWO?

I mean, the NWO invasion of the WWF is wrestling's story of the year so far. In fact, it ranks right up there with Ric Flair's 1991 jump to the WWF, the original NWO invasion of WCW, and Vince McMahon's purchase of WCW as the biggest news stories of the WrestleMania era.

In light of that, it would seem pretty silly of me to write this column on why Lance Storm is the best untapped talent in the Fed, or why Jazz should be furious at the WWF for not bringing in any top-notch challengers to her title. So, logically speaking, this column should be about Scott Hall, Kevin Nash, and Hulk Hogan and what their presence means to the future of the WWF.

It's just that—well, I'm sick of the NWO already.

I'm sick of the daily Internet updates on WWF locker room morale. I'm sick of hearing about backstage politics and wrestlers afraid of being held down. I'm sick of those damn black and white NWO T-shirts and Hogan's mismatched facial hair. I'm sick of Hall and Nash's aren't-we-so-cool personae.

As I sit here writing this installment of "The Straight Shooter," WrestleMania is more than two weeks away. By the time you read this, you'll know if Rock humbled Hogan and if Austin squashed Hall. I suspect that's what will happen. I'm just not that interested.

Please correct me if I'm wrong, but is there anyone who looks back at the New World Order era of WCW and thinks, *Man, that's a storyline I could* ***never*** *get sick of?* For God's sake, between black and whites, "B" teams, Wolfpacs, and silver and blacks, WCW trotted out a new version every time T-shirt sales dipped. WCW did more than kill the goose that laid the golden egg; it disemboweled the damn thing and squeezed out its innards in search of that last shiny nugget.

I'll pause for a moment to let you fully digest that metaphor.

Hogan and crew will draw money for the WWF, and that's great. But how viable will they be in six months? The Hogan-Rock staredown was an all-time classic WWF moment, but 90 percent of that was simply because it was the first time Hogan cut a promo in the WWF in nine years. How long will it take for the novelty of seeing the NWO in McMahonland to wear off? After WrestleMania, I don't see any staying power for the NWO. I see these guys cutting the same promos we all know and continuing their run of cartoonish supervillainy for months and months and months.

In fairness, I have nothing against Hogan, Nash, and Hall. Despite all the flak he takes, Hogan draws money. Hall's charisma gets him to the top. Nash ... well, he does strike me as being a jerk. All three of these guys could have entertaining matches in the WWF. Imagine Hall vs. Rob Van Dam in a ladder match, or Hogan vs. Austin in a no-disqualification match. Believe it or not, I think Hogan vs. Rhyno (remember him?) could be a surprisingly good match. But the NWO shtick just has to go. In this business, six years is a lifetime, and that's how long the NWO has been around. The New World Order has to be shattered.

The upside to all this is that the WWF hasn't bought into the aura of invincibility these guys cultivated in WCW. During the February 19 edition of *Smackdown,* the NWO guys got the kind of comeuppance they always managed to avoid in WCW. Austin singlehandedly beat down all three members, kidnapped Hall, and terrorized The Outsiders throughout the show. Apparently, Austin isn't going to respond to the latest NWO invasion by throwing a fit and silently sulking in the rafters for 15 months.

That's a good thing. At least NWO Version 6.0 comes with a small

Kevin Nash wearing an NWO T-shirt and acting like a true menace. Dan Murphy has seen that too many times over the last six years and isn't interested in seeing it much more in the WWF. He wouldn't mind seeing the NWO guys stick around—just not as NWO guys.

Brock Lesnar and numerous other WWF developmental wrestlers should be "invading" the WWF soon, maybe even before you read this column. The Murph can't wait to see them in the big leagues. These guys might grow to resent Hall, Hogan, and Nash.

sense of trepidation and some fear. And so far, the WWF wrestlers have done more than impotently shrug their shoulders as the NWO makes a complete mockery of them, which is more than could be said about Sting, Lex Luger, and the Steiners during the first NWO tour of terror.

If the WWF wanted to do something else to spice this up, perhaps it should look to Dallas Page. Page made his career by going to war with the New World Order when almost no one else would. Page always brought a sense of believability and emotion to the war with the NWO. Fans rallied behind him as he turned some of the support away from Hall and Nash. Let's see Page bump into Hogan in the back and see what kind of staredown those two could have. Maybe that could get me more interested in the NWO.

Here's another thought: The NWO guys walked right into the WWF and took main-event spots. Their presence has bumped a few guys back down into the mid-card ranks and pushed a few mid-carders down even further. The WWF has a long list of former WCW guys under contract but still on the sidelines, and dozens of promising developmental prospects competing in dark matches and feeder territories. Seeing Hogan, Nash, and Hall take their spots has to light a fire under those guys. When the Brock Lesnars, Ron Watermans, Ravens, and Chris Benoits of this world get their chance, something tells me they're going to ratchet their game up one step further.

Now that invasion will be very exciting. □

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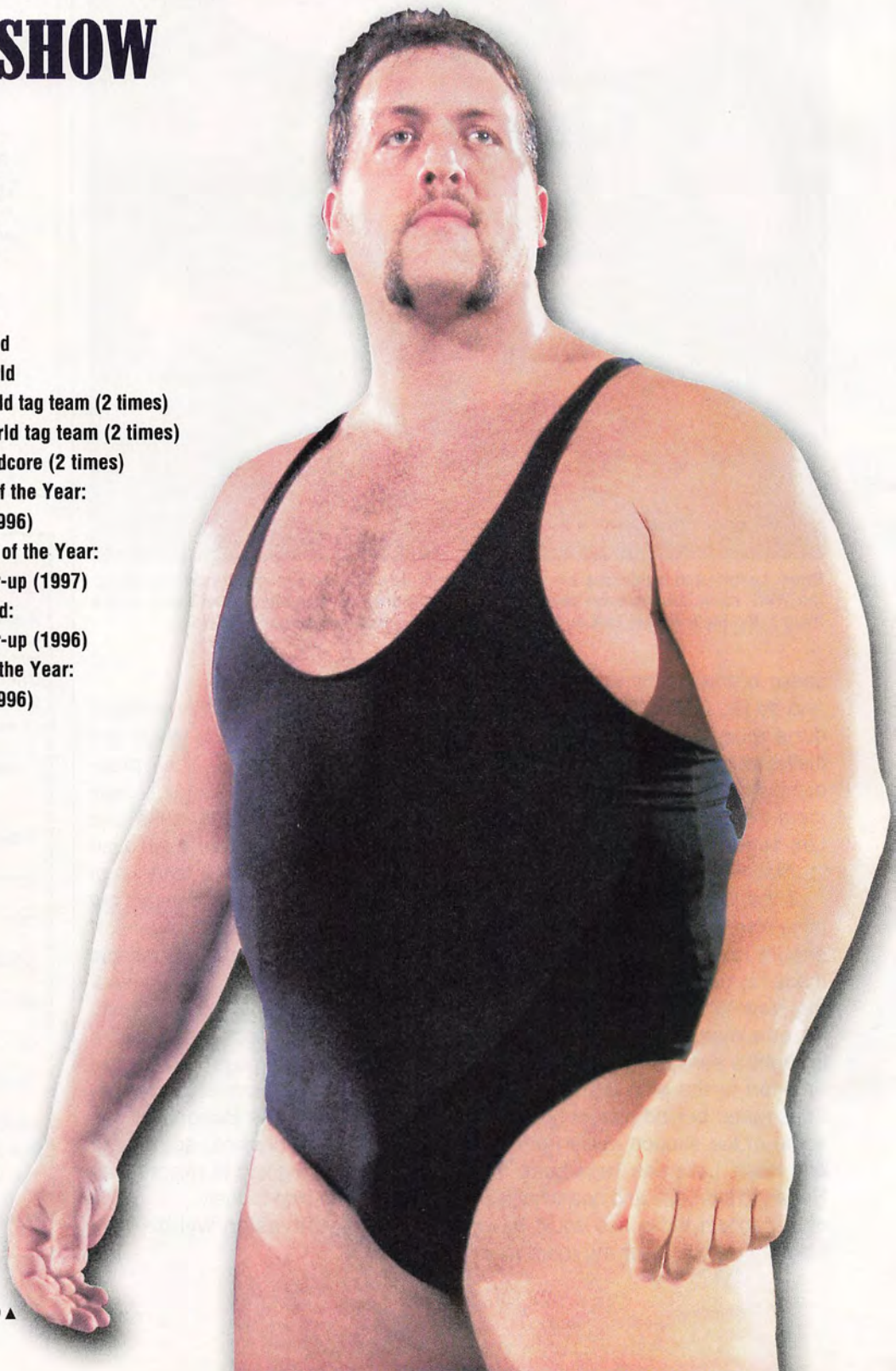
THE Wrestling ANALYST

THE BIG SHOW

Years Pro: 6
Size: 7'2", 485
"*PWI* 500" Listings: 2001—72
2000—16
1999—34
1998—31
1997—8
1996—2
Titles: WWF World
WCW World
WWF World tag team (2 times)
WCW World tag team (2 times)
WWF hardcore (2 times)
PWI Awards: Wrestler of the Year:
Winner (1996)
Tag Team of the Year:
3rd runner-up (1997)
Most Hated:
3rd runner-up (1996)
Rookie of the Year:
Winner (1996)



THE NUMBERS

Offense (8.5): The Big Show is more aggressive than giant wrestlers of the past, especially at the opening bell. He has suffered too many frustrating and heartbreaking losses to enter matches with overconfidence. Instead, he prefers to immediately lower the boom on his opponent's back, push him in the corner, and place his huge boot across his throat.

Defense (8.5): His sheer size helps him counter most moves fairly effectively. Show's best counter against a bodyslam is to just continue standing there. His best defense against a clothesline is, well, to just stand there and let his opponent bounce off of him. Fellow big men such as The Undertaker and Kane have managed to clothesline him over the top rope, but, to his credit, he lands on his feet nearly every time.

Experience (8.5): He wrestled in WCW at the height of its popularity, then joined Vince McMahon when the WWF reclaimed the industry's top spot. Because he reigned as world champion of both federations, he should have gained the know-how to be a more consistent and more driven performer today. His talent is adequate, but his desire to be an elite player remains questionable.

Conditioning (6.0): In his rookie year of 1995, in light of his huge size and amazing speed, he would have earned a 9.0 or better. Today, Show looks about as heavy as ever, which doesn't bode well for his future career or personal health. Let's hope he has really quit smoking and changed his diet.

Science (7.0): Show's strategy is to hoist opponents as high as possible and drill them to the canvas with all his might. This lift-and-plop approach is effective, but it rarely goes beyond bodyslams, press-slams, and choke-slams. Why doesn't he reach into his old repertoire, which included the double-underhook suplex and a pretty awesome vertical suplex?

Stamina (6.0): He has gained at least 50 pounds since his debut. The added weight hinders his mobility and doesn't enhance his strength. Six years of active competition have worn down his knees. Worst of all, Show no longer has the confidence to pace his matches effectively. If Show cannot get a quick win, he tends to run out of gas and make mistakes.

Power (10.0): This won't change anytime soon. Sheer power, and the height and reach to maximize the effectiveness of his moves, will always make Show a dangerous competitor. Not even his closest rivals in terms of size—The Undertaker, Kane, and Kevin Nash—are in the same league.

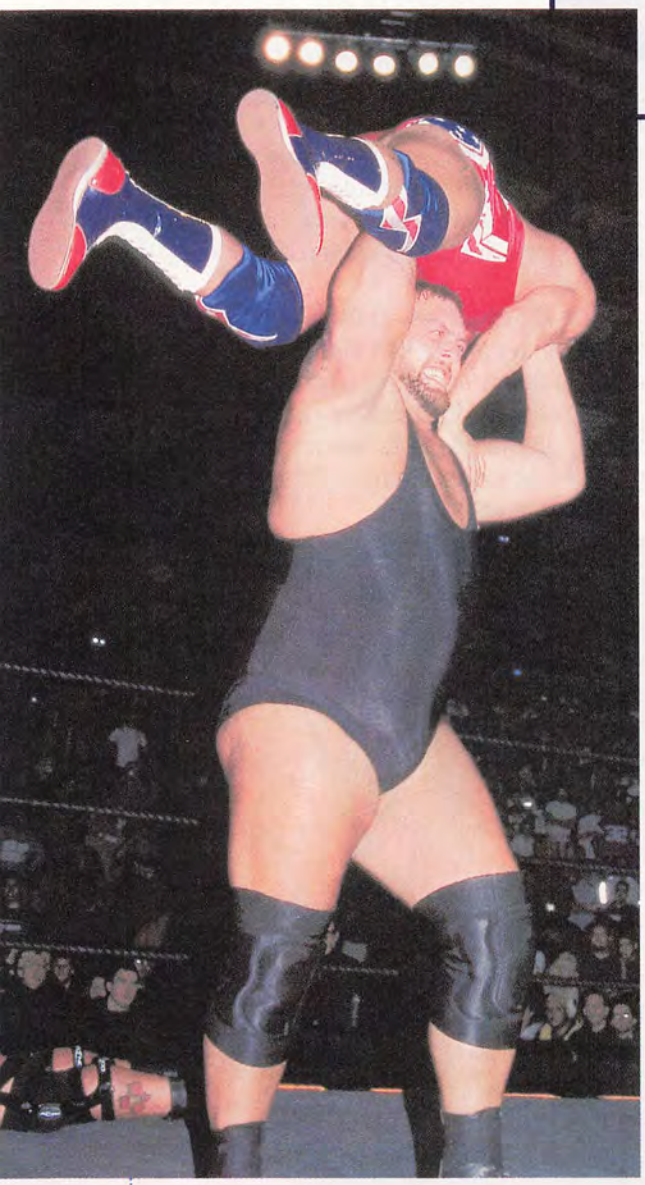
Speed (6.5): The 430-pound Giant used to dazzle crowds with his accurate and well-timed dropkicks. Where are they now? Big Show's weight gain has had a profound effect on his speed and agility. It hasn't affected his mobility around the ring so much because his long arms and legs always give him proximity to the ropes. He's more vulnerable on the floor.

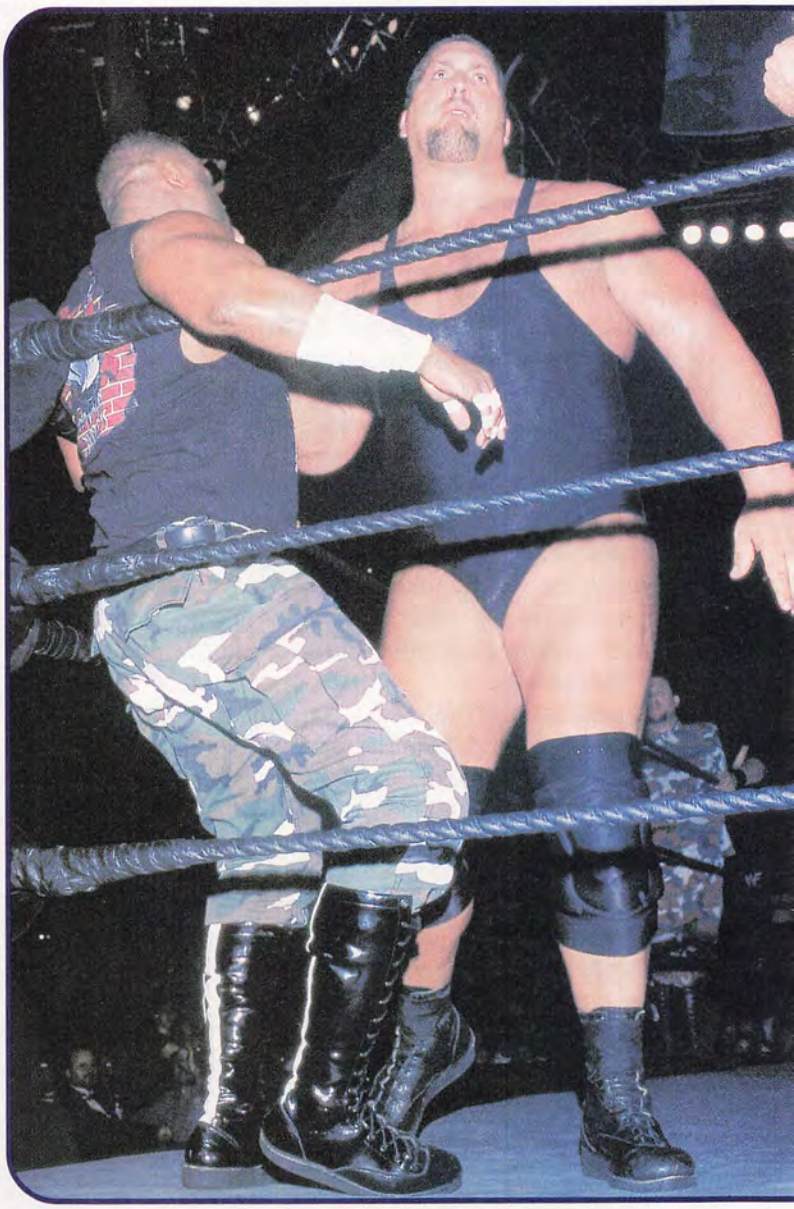
Ability To Absorb Punishment (9.5): Many of the more famous WWF finishers are ineffective against Big Show. The Stone-Cold stunner, Rock bottom, last ride power bomb, and Kane's choke-slam are difficult (though not impossible) to execute against the former world champ. Kurt Angle's anklelock, however, could be a different story, and he has taken a few nasty Van Daminators.

Quality Of Opposition (9.0): Show reigned as hardcore champ in the first half of 2001 and, one year later, he's foundering on the Intercontinental championship level, eligible for occasional title shots but never coming all that close to winning the gold. Still, the WWF mid-card boasts some of the best wrestlers in the world right now.

① **It was interesting to watch The Big Show and Kane try to choke-slam each other at the same time a few months ago. Kane got the best of that brief feud. Perhaps Show would have fared better if he had more weapons in his arsenal. The choke-slam will only take him so far.**

② Big Show has dropped out of the WWF's top tier—that's for sure. Something is really wrong, however, if he's in the same match as The Brooklyn Brawler. Sure, dominating Brawler is hardly a challenge for him, but he needs to push himself to improve, get in the best shape of his life, and earn the main-event matches the WWF expected he'd get on a regular basis.





③ Size and power are obviously Big Show's greatest assets. When he's on top of his game and his opponents are not, he can flat-out dominate. What can Kurt Angle do to counter a press-slam? But if Angle can knock Show off his feet or just extend the match past, say, the 10-minute mark, Show will have problems.

④ **Let's face it: It would be a fluke if someone the size of Spike Dudley were able to beat The Big Show cleanly. But someone like Spike could cause Show some problems by constantly moving and quickening the pace of a match. Stamina and conditioning have been problems for Show in the last few years. There isn't much more the WWF can do to get him to take full advantage of the great opportunity he has to be a superstar.**

⑤ **Show needs to either keep his opponent cornered or keep his hands on him in order to maximize his chances of winning. He relies so heavily on simple power moves. If only he could get motivated to try different things and make himself less predictable in the ring.**

THE ANALYSIS

Repertoire: His dropkick and his variety of suplexes have almost disappeared from The Big Show's arsenal. The super choke-slam is also noticeably absent. That's the move in which he would place his hapless foe on the top turnbuckle, grab him around the throat, and choke-slam him onto the canvas. He has dabbled with a new finisher called the final cut, but his lack of clean wins has made that a seldom-used maneuver as well.

Strengths: Despite his sometimes-erratic offense, Show has kept a relatively cool head. It's due to his naturally laid-back demeanor, not a learned skill. That's to his advantage because his opponents must work themselves into a frenzy to get their adrenaline pumping and subsequently mount an adequate offense. When wrestlers rely upon primal instinct, rather than strategy, Show is able to capitalize on their mistakes.

Weaknesses: Obviously they don't make treadmills his size. Show's girth has expanded with each passing year. During his extended stay in Ohio Valley Wrestling in 2000, trainers helped Show slim down to about 450 pounds. WWF officials were so impressed by Show's progress that he was allowed to enter the 2001 Royal Rumble and return to the Federation full-time. Their reward? Show regained much of his weight by WrestleMania.

Defining Career Moment: After months of hearing about his unfulfilled potential, Show surprised the industry by defeating Triple-H for the WWF World title at Survivor Series 1999, held in Detroit. He made history by becoming the sixth man to win both the NWA/WCW and WWF world championships. He had the distinction of holding the WWF belt as the world ushered in the year 2000.

Future: Show dropped matches to Booker T and Kane in early-2002, losing to both in less than three minutes. He lost a three-way bout, also involving Rob Van Dam and Lance Storm, to determine the top contender to William Regal's I-C title for WrestleMania. But Big Show shouldn't despair. The 30-year-old star has time to revamp and become the main-eventer he was supposed to be … if that's what he wants.

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WRESTLER OF THE WEEK

WWF STARS' CAR FLIPS; AVOID SERIOUS INJURIES

LIFE WITHOUT WRESTLING FOR MADUSA?

MATCH OF THE WEEK

TAT AND NAY

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(Continued from page 13)

tion in Philadelphia. It was held in the intimate confines of the Murphy Rec Center in front of a very enthusiastic sellout crowd of more than 400. The two biggest matches saw **Super Crazy** beat **Eddie Guerrero** to become the ROH Intercontinental champion, and **Low-Ki** win a three-way match against **American Dragon** and **Christopher Daniels**. Talented wrestlers and good backing make this startup indy promotion one to watch ... The WB's *Nikki,* featuring the beautiful **Nikki Cox** as the wife of an aspiring professional wrestler, has been canceled. No surprise there ... **Chief Little Bear** became the new Panhandle Championship Wrestling heavyweight champion by winning a battle royal in impressive style ... Top Rope Championship Wrestling officials have suspended **Vance Nevada** for refusing to wrestle **Gene Swan**. In another interesting note from TRCW, new North Atlantic champion **Malibu** is starting to look down on his fans and opponents. It's funny what championship gold does to egos.

This March, the WWF took a swing over to Japan, and it was a huge success. A lot of the top WWF wrestlers made the trip, though a few were left behind to ensure that the March 4 *Raw* didn't have to become a "Best Of" edition. **The Rock**, **Chris Jericho**, **Ric Flair**, and **Shane McMahon** were the most notable names to appear, and just like in the States, The Rock was the most over wrestler on the roster. Given the tour's success, return trips to Asia are already being planned.

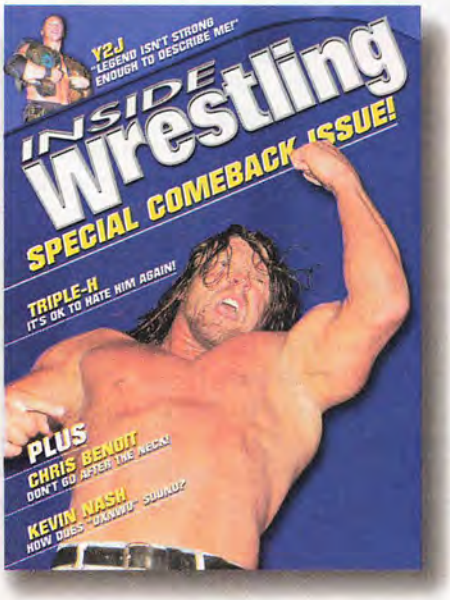
Jody Fleisch beat **Doug Williams** in the finals of the 2002 King of England tournament, which has been hailed as Great Britain's version of the ECWA Super 8. Also competing in the event were Eddie Guerrero and **Brian "Grandmaster Sexay" Christopher**, by the way. **Dynamite Kid** of **British Bulldogs** fame came out in his wheelchair to present the award to Fleisch and received a very nice ovation from the crowd.

Well, fans, that does it for me this month. Enjoy your wanderings. □

Whether they're wrestling each other on the West Coast or the East Coast, American Dragon and Low-Ki always have thrilling matches together. They had another at the first Ring of Honor show in Philadelphia. Dragon may be getting the best of Low-Ki here, but Low-Ki turned the three-way bout also involving Chris Daniels around and ended up winning.

this month in...

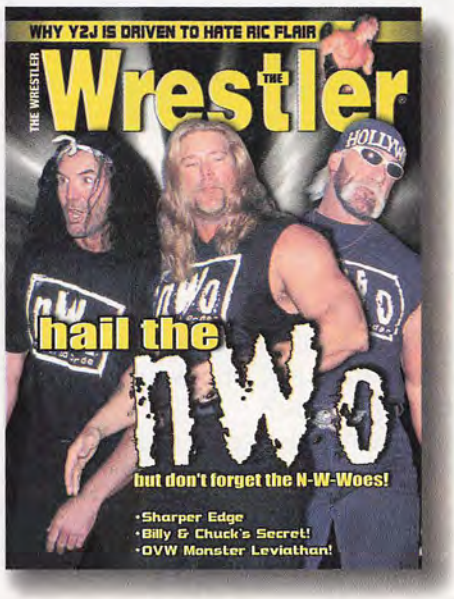
INSIDE Wrestling®



Looks like 2002 is shaping up to be a year of comebacks. **TRIPLE-H** has already returned, and we think it's time you started hating him again. It'd be for his own good! ... **CHRIS BENOIT** is on his way back, but we wonder how opponents will approach matches with him now—if they approach him at all. Will he be the same wrestler after spinal surgery? ... We all know **KEVIN NASH** is back in a big way, but who will be in the "band" that he puts together this time? ... Don't miss our "Hotseat" with **CHRIS JERICHO**! He says "legend" isn't a strong enough word to describe him!

All this—and much more—in the June 2002 issue of ***Inside Wrestling***

THE Wrestler®



The **NWO** was a phenomenon that rocked the wrestling world in 1996. It was the hottest thing going. But the NWO had its share of forgettable moments, too. We look back at the group's good, bad, and ugly history in a special 14-page section! ... You know **CHRIS JERICHO** hates **THE ROCK**. You know he despises **TRIPLE-H**. You know he loathes **STEVE AUSTIN**. But do you know how much he abhors **RIC FLAIR**—or why? ... **WILLIAM REGAL** has gotten the best of **EDGE** in their feud, but believe it or not, it was the best thing that ever happened to the Canadian star. We'll tell you why!

All this—and much more—in the July 2002 issue of ***The Wrestler***

You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just *have* to know about this person. Well, these are the 12 questions you'd *never* think of asking

12 questions

ERIC BISCHOFF

What celebrity do you wish you could have convinced to try his or her hand at wrestling?

Shania Twain.

If someone were to make a movie about your life, who would you want to play you?

Gene Hackman. He could make me look young.

Who do you think would win a martial arts match between you and Ernest Miller?

Definitely Ernest Miller. I tried that once and it didn't work out well.

What's the strangest type of sandwich you've ever eaten?

When I was in North Korea, I once ate a sandwich that I think was either horse or poodle, but I didn't know how to ask in Korean what it was.

What's the most outrageous thing you've seen while in Sturgis, South Dakota (the site of WCW's Road Wild pay-per-views)?

I saw a woman who weighed about 300 pounds sitting on the back of a Harley with a pickle sticking out of her thong.

What city did you find to have the least receptive wrestling crowds?

They were all pretty receptive when we were hot, but I'd say Los Angeles just because the people there are so used to seeing such a wide variety of entertainment.

Which is your favorite CD to listen to after you've had a truly lousy day?

Something by either Bruce Springsteen or John Mellencamp. Mellencamp's latest, *Cuttin' Heads,* would probably be my pick.

You have a choice between Vince Russo, Jim Hellwig, and Anne Robinson (host of *The Weakest Link*) to live with on a deserted island for the rest of your life. Which one would you pick and why?

Definitely Anne Robinson because Jim Hellwig would drive me crazy and I'd want to kill Vince Russo.

What's your best estimate on how many times in the last year you've been asked whether you're going to the WWF?

Most of them have been in the last few weeks, but I'd say overall a total of no less than three dozen times.

What's your least favorite spectator sport and why?

Golf, because I can't play it, although I have tried.

What's the smartest thing Hulk Hogan has ever said to you?

Friendship is friendship, and business is business.

What's the best advice you've ever gotten from a family member?

Be patient, and that advice came from my wife.

You have a hammer, a midget, and a roulette wheel. What are your plans for the evening?

I'll develop a brand-new game show for NBC! □

Photo by Jan Sanders

for the guys...

Photo by Vern Verna

JACQUELYN

BEST FEATURE...

Her hair

WHAT GUY WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE HER DRESSED UP AS...

A tight-fitting policewoman's uniform. She sure impressed a lot of guys in her authoritative role on the original *Tough Enough*

FACE IT, MEN CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF...

Her sensitive side. She rarely shows that side of herself in public, but she has a really good heart

BUT WATCH OUT FOR THAT...

Stubborn streak and fiery temper. Once someone has made her mad, it can be hard to calm her down. It's better to just avoid making her angry!

SHE'D BE GREAT IN THIS TV OR MOVIE PART...

The Whoopi Goldberg part in the movie *Ghost*

IF SHE WEREN'T INVOLVED IN WRESTLING, WE COULD SEE HER SUCCEEDING AS...

A martial arts instructor

ONE THING SHE COULD STAND TO IMPROVE UPON IS...

Interviews have never been her forte, although she does usually get right to the point when she is given time to talk

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT...

She started her wrestling career as Sweet Georgia Brown and even competed for a while with her head completely shaved!

OVERHEARD AT RINGSIDE...

"Yeah, I guess that old saying about good things coming in small packages is true. And she sure packs a lot into that small package!"

for the ladies...

FRANKIE KAZARIAN

BEST FEATURE ...

His brown eyes. What a penetrating stare he has!

WHAT WOMAN WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE HIM DRESSED UP IN ...

Faded blue jeans and a black mesh shirt

FACE IT, WOMEN CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF ...

His reserved personality. There's something mysteriously attractive about the quiet ones!

BUT WATCH OUT FOR THAT ...

Boiling point. It takes a lot to get him really mad, but when he does, he's a hard one to slow down

HE'D BE GREAT IN THIS TV OR MOVIE PART ...

The Duncan MacLeod character in the *Highlander* series

IF HE WEREN'T INVOLVED IN WRESTLING, WE COULD SEE HIM SUCCEEDING AS ...

A fashion model. Preferably an underwear model.

ONE THING HE COULD STAND TO IMPROVE UPON IS ...

His aggression. He's just a little too laid-back. If he had a fire lit under him, he'd be even further along in his career than he is now

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT ...

This West Coast-based independent star initially trained with the legendary Killer Kowalski

OVERHEARD AT RINGSIDE ...

"If this guy's nickname is truly appropriate and he is 'The Future,' I just can't wait for tomorrow!"

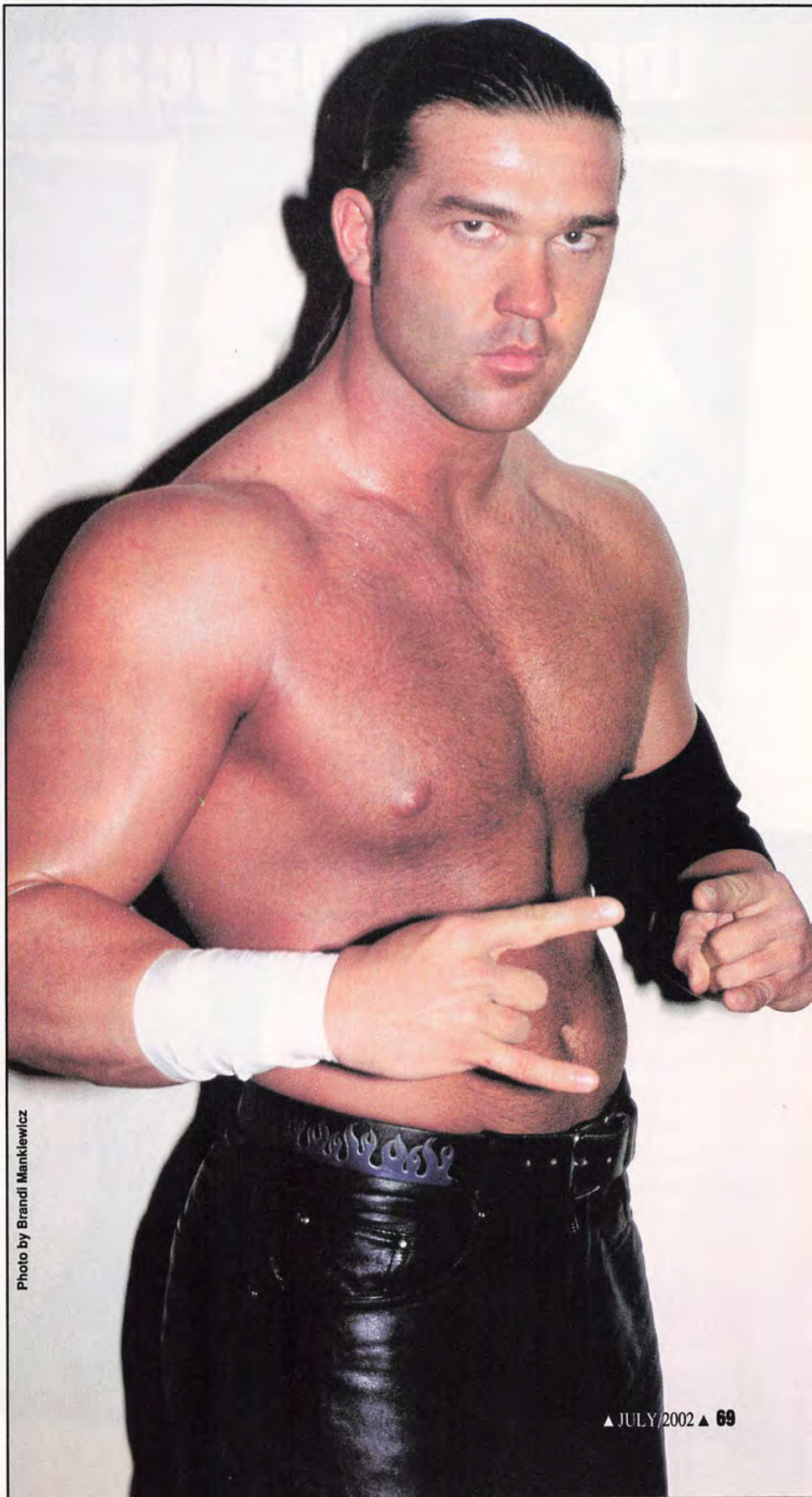
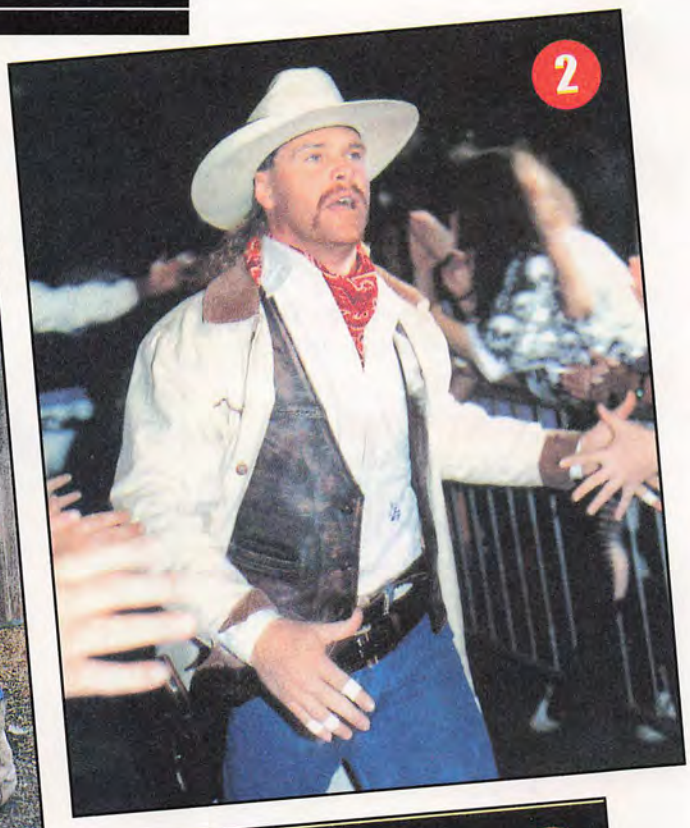
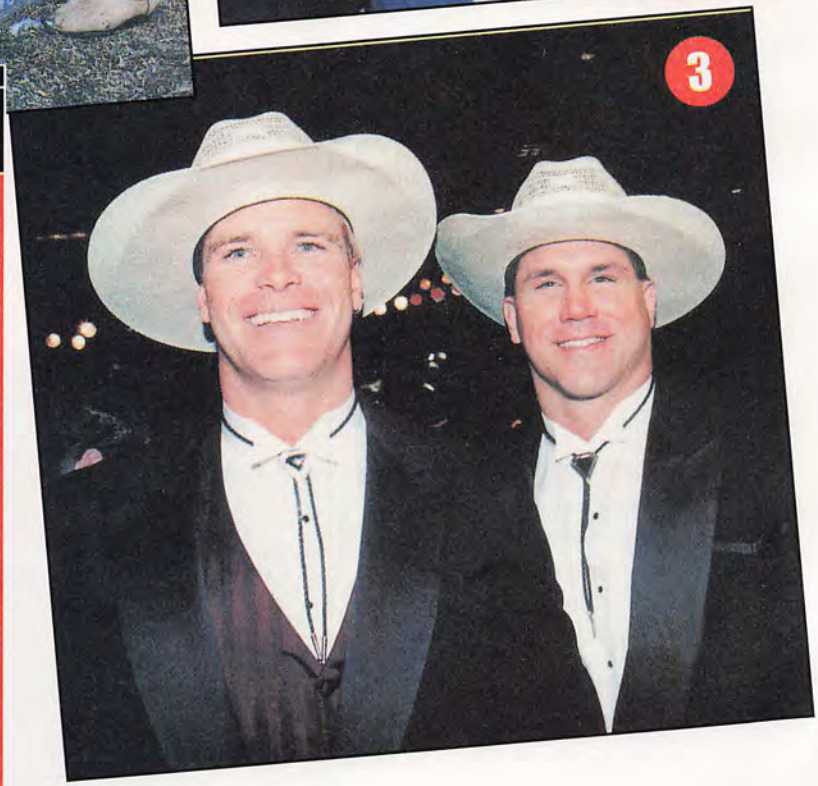


Photo by Brandi Manklewicz

It's amazing how drastically certain superstars change their looks over the years. A change in hair color or hairstyle here, a new ring outfit there, a few more tattoos here and there, or the mother of all changes ... the total gimmick overhaul. Every month, *PWI* will show you just how much one of your favorites has transformed himself. Yeah, it really is the same person in all these photos!

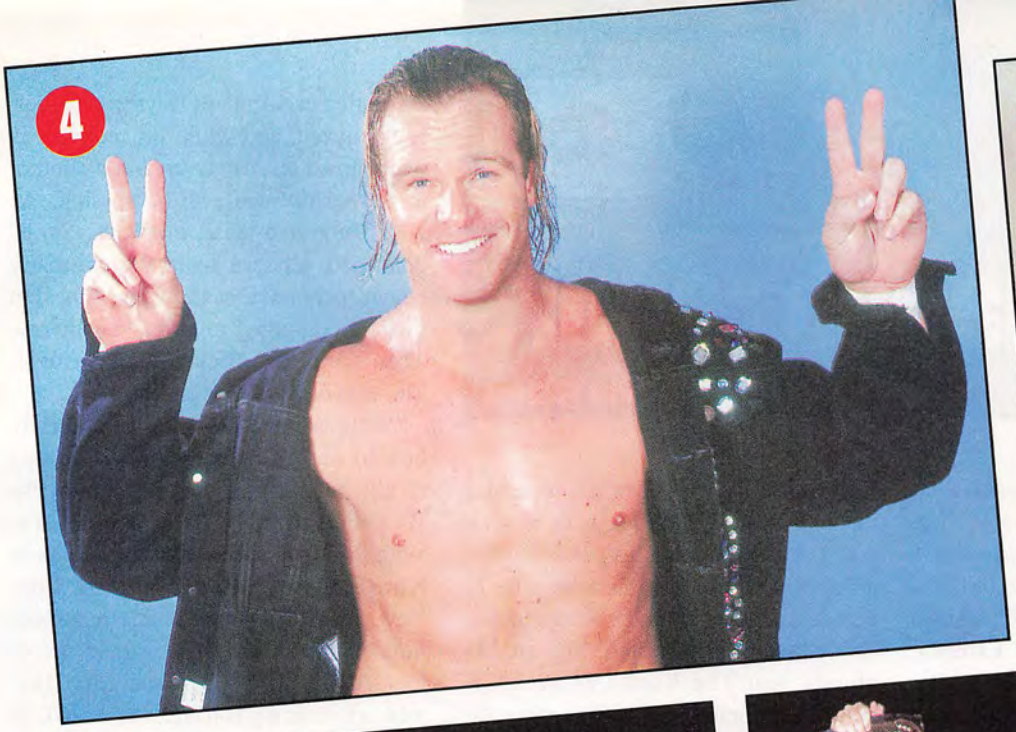
through the years





THE BILLY GUNN FILES

1—The Smokin' Gunns—before they were The Smokin' Gunns (1992)
2—Billy Gunn could be one rugged cowpoke (1994)
3—Billy and Bart Gunn as they looked in the WWF (1996)
4—Think he'd like us to forget about Rockabilly? (1997)
5—Gunn at his peak, as a member of DX (1998)
6—"Mr. Ass" was a tag team champion with style (1999)
7—A brown-haired I-C champ—for 19 days (2000)
8—Where's his good buddy Chuck? (2001)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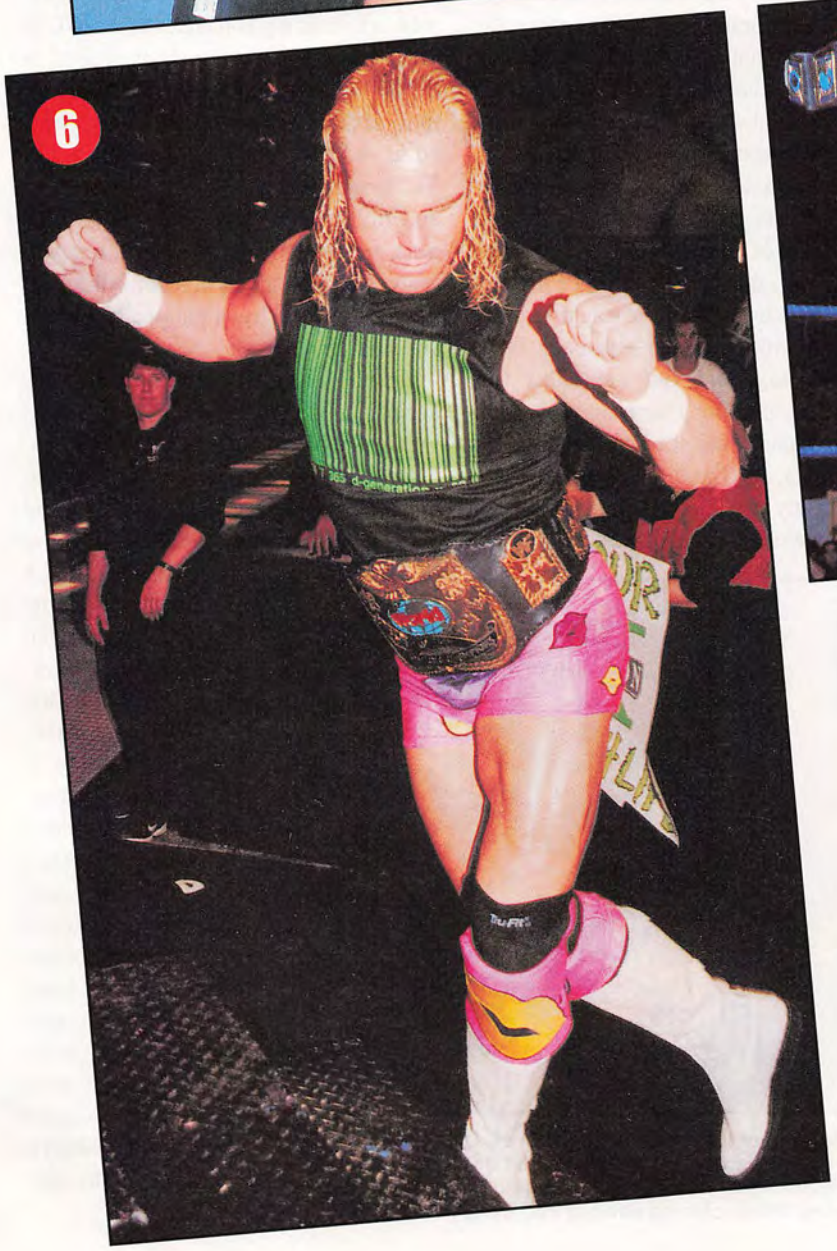
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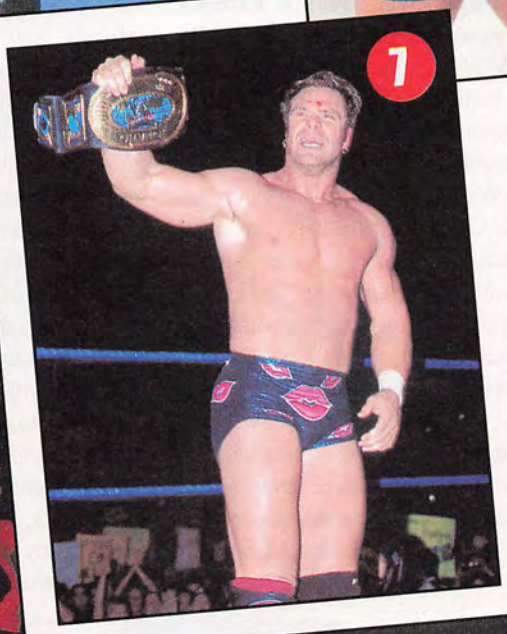
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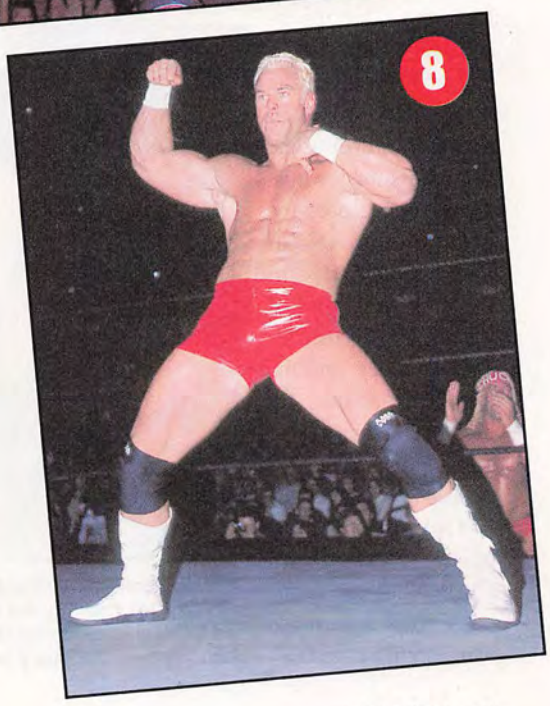
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the japan report

By Mike Spillane

FIRST, THE RINGS promotion folded, then BattlArts followed suit. Now a larger player on the *puroresu* landscape has also gone under: FMW is no more. Once home to men like **Atsushi Onita**, **Hayabusa**, **Masato Tanaka**, **Mike Awesome**, and a plethora of other stars, FMW announced its intention to file for bankruptcy and close down in mid-February.

Throughout the 1990s, Frontier Martial Arts Wrestling was largely synonymous with Onita and the hardcore death matches that became his specialty. It was main-event matches like the "spider web broken glass barbed-wire exploding cage double-hell" death match that pushed a bloody, extreme style to the forefront of *puroresu*, as FMW grew and grew.

The influence of FMW extended beyond the Japanese independent scene, where smaller imitation companies like Big Japan and Tokyo Pro proliferated. In the States, FMW's influence gave rise to Extreme Championship Wrestling's style and product tone; the two groups even shared a number of the same stars for a while. Across the globe, the growing appeal of FMW contributed to the mainstreaming of hardcore, extreme-style matches, and the impact it had can still be seen everywhere from North America to Asia.

Onita eventually parted ways with FMW, and the company took a turn toward sports entertainment in the late-1990s while grooming the high-flying **Hayabusa** as its new top star. Later abandoning his persona as the airborne falcon, Hayabusa became **H**, best described as a strange amalgamation of characters like **Raven**, **Shawn Michaels**, and **The Rock**. While FMW could not come close to matching the success of giants like New Japan and All-Japan, it existed as a distinct number three, well above the other independent organizations on the *puroresu* scene.

Unfortunately, the increased emphasis on sports entertainment precipitated the decline of FMW, and with the advent of NOAH, the group fell even further behind. To try to rekindle flagging interest, the aimless H character once again became Hayabusa, but attendance figures showed no long-term improvement. The company had simply alienated too many fans.

Tragedy struck FMW in its final year. With interest at an all-time low, a horrible in-ring accident left Hayabusa partially paralyzed, and while his recovery is ongoing, no one can be certain if a return to active duty will ever be possible. As 2001 came to a close, FMW was on its deathbed. Checks from the company began to bounce at the same time fan interest continued to spiral downward. Then came the official announcement. The saga of FMW has ended.

Atsushi Onita pins rival Mr. Danger during a 1995 FMW bout. Onita deserves a lot of credit for making the extreme/hardcore style popular in Japan in the 1990s—and ECW was modeled at least in part after FMW. The promotion underwent many changes over the years before finally closing down in February.

While some companies have already bowed out in 2002, it looks like this might be the year for All-Japan Pro Wrestling to make its big comeback. With the signing of **Keiji Muto**, **Kendo Ka Shin**, and **Satoshi Kojima** from New Japan, All-Japan finally has some momentum. In addition to these defectors, All-Japan has acquired **Kaz Hayashi**, a former top contender to the WCW cruiserweight title. Hayashi wallowed in the WWF developmental program for most of 2001 before he was finally granted his release. It only took a few weeks for Hayashi to return to his native Japan and find employment. Hayashi and Ka Shin are expected to spearhead a newly reinvented junior division for All-Japan, a promotion that has traditionally emphasized heavyweights.

Interest has already started to increase, and All-Japan fans rejoiced when **Toshiaki Kawada** finally captured the Triple Crown from Muto on February 24 in Tokyo. Kawada has had a long and storied romance with the Triple Crown, which has eluded him in the past due to injuries and unfortunate happenstance. Although this is Kawada's fourth Triple Crown reign, it figures to be his first defining one, provided he can stay healthy. Kawada's previous three reigns lasted a total of seven months, which is not a long time by All-Japan standards. He'll have to be at his very best with men like Muto, Kojima and **Genichiro Tenryu** already waiting to challenge him. □

the mexico report

By Mike Spillane

TO FANS RAISED on the style of pro wrestling we see in the United States, Lucha Libre often seems like a peculiar, if not downright incongruous form of grappling. However, even in this country, there are communities of enthusiastic fans who enjoy both American-style pro wrestling and Lucha Libre equally, and a recent AAA event in Dallas proved as much.

While AAA typically limits itself to Mexico, on rare occasions, the group does appear in Southern California and Texas. The large crowd that gathered for AAA's most recent Dallas card, which featured a wild night of fast-paced Lucha, including mixed tag bouts, six-man showdowns, and even a minis match, reacted very positively.

The show opened with the ever-popular **Mascarita Sagrada**, a tiny *technico,* facing off against the despised **Mini Abismo Negro**. Sagrada has been a staple of AAA cards for years, and his veteran status helped him to victory over the less-experienced Mini Abismo. An inter-gender tag match saw AAA's bogus **La Parka** team with **Lady Apache** in a winning effort against the full-sized **Abismo Negro** and **Tiffany**.

For the main event, **Hector Garza** led the *rudo* contingent, teaming with **Cibernetico** and AAA's imitation **Psicosis** to take on the popular trio of **Octagon**, **Perro Aguayo Jr.**, and newcomer **Aguila de America** (which roughly translates to "American Eagle"). The card was dominated by the *technicos,* and this match was no different. At the end of the evening, only one match, featuring **The Black Family**, went to the *rudos,* while the *technicos* swept the remaining bouts, some in a single fall, and others in best-of-three-falls format.

On a night honoring 50 years of Lucha Libre at Mexico's Arena Aficion, **Blue Panther** wrestled **El Solar** for close to an hour in a titanic battle of legends. Panther's UWA championship was on the line as these two veterans went at it, with Panther emerging victorious. Over the years, Panther has been well-respected for his tremendous technical acumen, and many long-time fans have equated his prowess with that of **Ric Flair** or **Bret Hart**. Blue Panther keeps himself in tremendous condition, and received his only bit of mainstream exposure in the United States in November 1994, when WCW and AAA brought the Lucha pay-per-view When Worlds Collide to the American market. Like other Lucha veterans such as **Atlantis**, **Dos Caras**, and **Satanico**, Blue Panther rarely wrestles outside his home country.

Mascarita Sagrada is a big hit wherever he goes, even if it is outside his native Mexico. AAA ran a rare card in Dallas recently, and Sagrada was one of the many *technicos* to post a big win. He defeated nemesis Mini Abismo Negro.

Arena Mexico has been host to a string of heated encounters between former friends **Shocker** and **Tarzan Boy** lately. Fans who attend shows inside that legendary facility are eagerly anticipating a hair vs. hair match between the two to put an end to the feud. A recent card at Arena Mexico also saw an appearance by the X-Men villain **Sabretooth**—or rather the man who portrayed him. **Tyler Mane**, who starred as the menacing Sabretooth in the 2000 film *X-Men,* is no stranger to Lucha Libre; he toured Mexico in the 1990s, and even had a brief stint in WCW before making the decision to pursue acting.

Poor **La Parka** just can't seem to catch a break. Parka was poised for a comeback after enduring a suspension imposed by the Lucha Commission, which, as punishment for brawling in the audience, had prevented him from competing in Tijuana. XLUM, currently one of Tijuana's hottest promotions, welcomed Parka back to action when his suspension was lifted and placed him in a trios match with **Cien Caras** and **Mascara Ano Dos Mil**. During the course of the battle, the *technico* team of **Negro Casas**, **Rey Misterio Sr.**, and **"Super Porky" Brazo de Oro** tossed the *rudos* from the ring. There, La Parka was pelted by garbage, but when he turned to face the crowd in an effort to make them stop, he struck a fan in plain view of the commissioner. Parka quickly abandoned the match and ran to the Commission table to explain himself. No action had been taken against him as of press time, but a final decision on the matter hadn't been made, either. □

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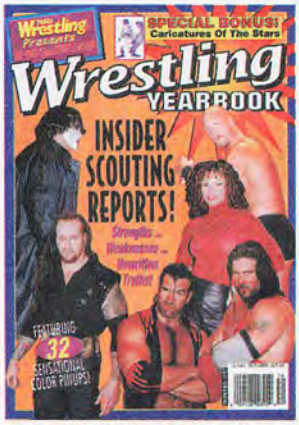

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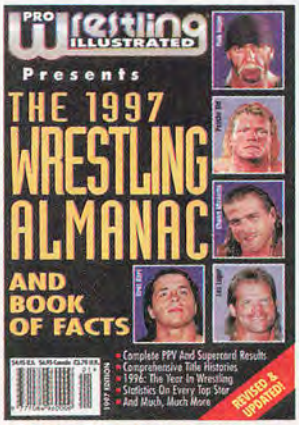

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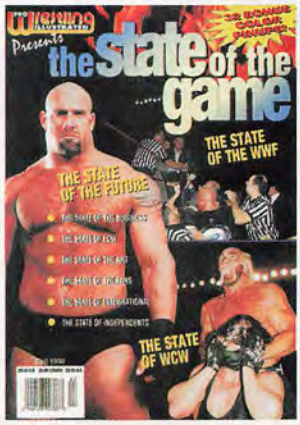

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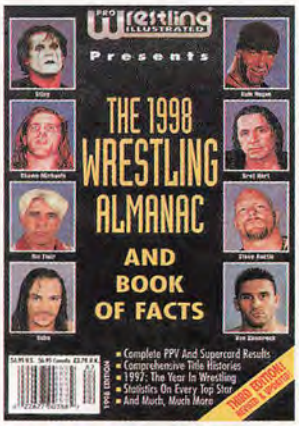

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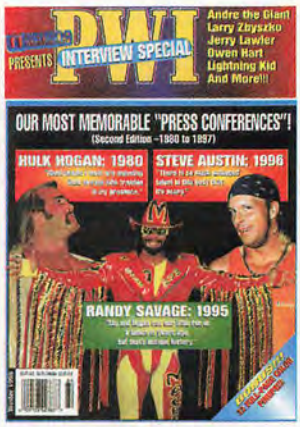

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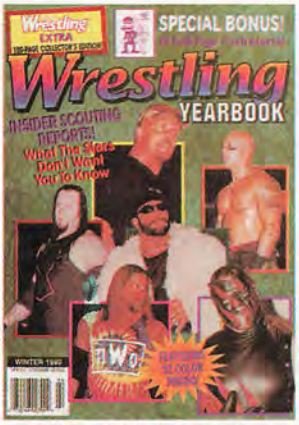

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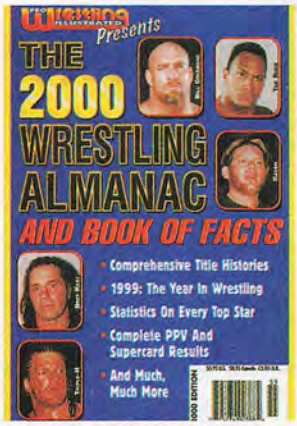
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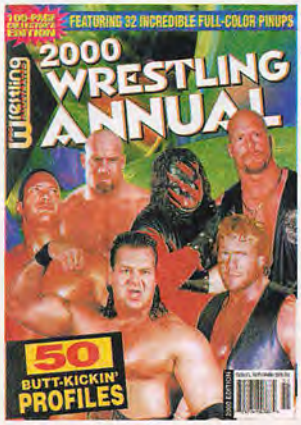

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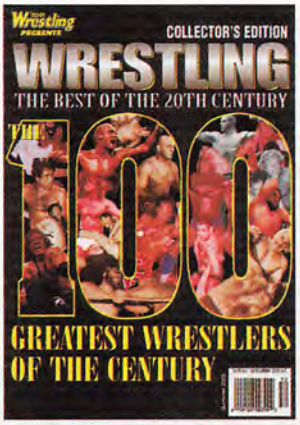

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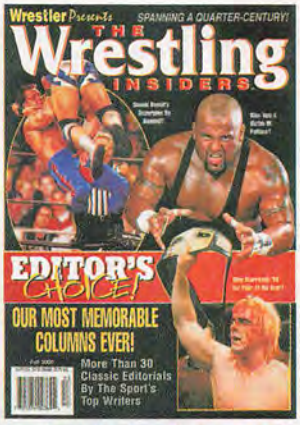

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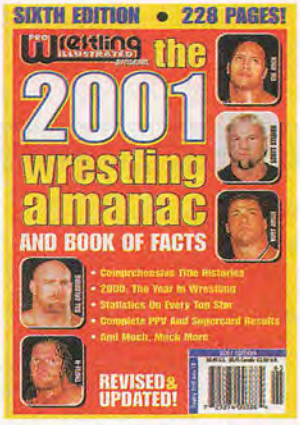
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Spotlight Card of the Month

MILWAUKEE, WI—WWF No Way Out pay-per-view at the Bradley Center: **Bradshaw** & **Faarooq** won a six-way tag team turmoil match by last defeating **Billy Gunn** & **Chuck Palumbo** ... **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Goldust** ... World tag team champions **Spike Dudley** & **Tazz** beat **Booker T** & **Test** when Tazz forced Test to tap out ... Intercontinental champion **William Regal** pinned **Edge** in a brass knuckles-on-a-pole match ... **The Rock** pinned **The Undertaker** ... **Kurt Angle** pinned **Triple-H** ... World champion **Chris Jericho** pinned **Steve Austin** after the **NWO** interfered.
(02-17-02)

—"Spotlight" photos by Gary Dineen

UNITED STATES

ALASKA

ANCHORAGE—Alaskan Wrestling Federation at the Egan Center: **Max Steele** beat **Blade** ... **Shade** defeated **Calvin Smoove** ... **Trustin Pain** defeated **Jubei** to win the heavyweight title ... **Spanky** defeated **American Dragon** ... **Taylor Matheny** beat **Frost** ... **Samoa Joe** defeated **Frankie Kazarian** ... **Eddie Guerrero** pinned **Christopher Daniels**.
(02-16-02)

—Dominick Valenti

DELAWARE

HARRINGTON—Maryland Championship Wrestling at Exhibit Hall: TV champion **Marcus Jordan** defeated **Joey Matthews** ... Cruiserweight champion **Qenaan Creed** beat **Ronnie Zukko** ... **Adam Flash** defeated **Julio Dinero** ... **Red** beat **Romeo Valentino** ... **Chad Bowman** & **Dino Divine** beat WZBH radio DJ **Cowboy** & **Van Hammer** ... **Headbanger Mosh** beat **Genesis** ... **Christian York**, **Joey Matthews**, **2-Dope**, & **Sydeswype** beat **The Holy Rollers**, **Doug Delicious**, & **Marcus Jordan** ... **Chris Chetti** & **Danny Doring** won a three-way match against **Joel** & **Jose Maximo** and **Mark** & **Jay Briscoe** ... **Tara** beat **Alexis Laree** ... Heavyweight champion **The Bruiser** beat **Orlando** Jordan ... **I. Khamals** won a battle royal.
(02-16-02)

—Timothy Rowe

FLORIDA

TAMPA—WWF at the USF Sun Dome: **Bubba the Love Sponge** beat **The Texas Hangman** ... **Albert** & **Scotty Too Hotty** beat **Big Bossman** & **Mr. Perfect** ... **Booker T** beat **Rob Van Dam** ... Light heavyweight champion **X-Pac** defeated **Spike Dudley** ... Women's champion **Jazz** beat **Trish Stratus** ... **Triple-H** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... **Bradshaw** & **Faarooq** defeated **Christian** & **Lance Storm** ... **Val Venis** pinned **Test** ... **Hulk Hogan** pinned **Rikishi** ... **Steve Austin** pinned **Scott Hall**.
(03-01-02)

—Duane Long

TITUSVILLE—World Pro Wrestling at the Andrew J. Gibson Gymnasium: **The Mighty Heinrich** defeated **The Psycho** by disqualification ... **Blaze Cruel** & **The Mighty Yankee I** defeated **El Macho** & **Silky Smooth** ... **The Zone** pinned Florida champ **The Darkness** to win the title ... **Silky Smooth** beat junior heavyweight champ **El Macho** in a ladder match to win the title ... **The Freak** defeated **Juan Morales** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champ **Jerry Grey** pinned **Doink the Clown**.
(02-10-02)

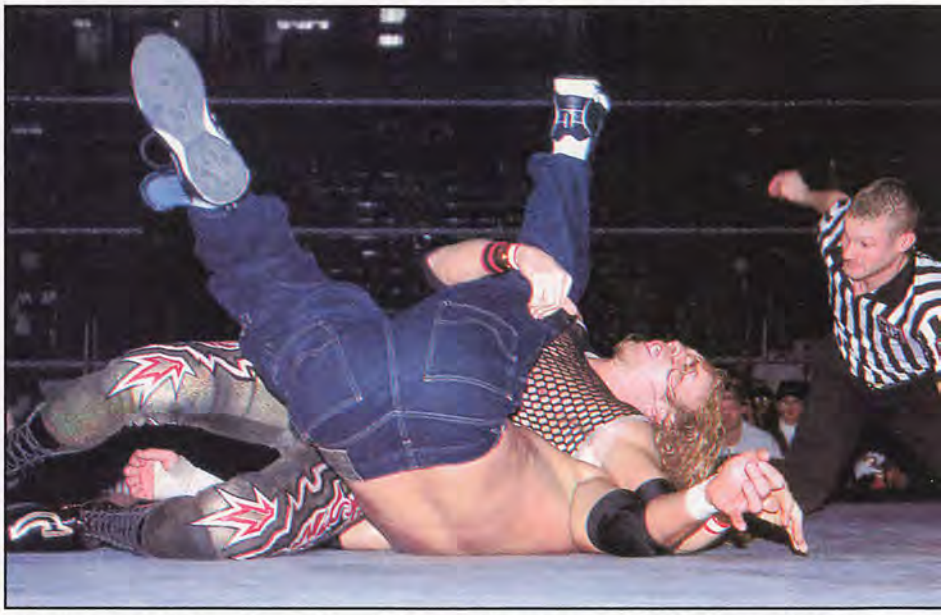
—Patrick Dollins

ST. PETERSBURG—IPW Hardcore Wrestling at the Florida Wrestleplex: IPW heavyweigh t champ **Billy Fives** won a three-way bout against **Scoot Andrews** and NWA Wildside heavyweight champion **A.J. Styles** ... **Wrongful Death** won a three-way match against Florida unified tag team champions **QuickieMart** and **Christian York** & **Joey Matthews** to win the title ... TV champion **Jeff Bradley** pinned **Rastaman** ... Florida unified cruiserweight champion **Justice** defeated **Cynic** ... **Axis** defeated IPW hardcore champion **Chaos** to win the title ... **Rod Steel**, **Pat Powers**, & **Pat McGroin** wrestled **Devin Nash**, **Frankie Capone**, & **Python** to a no-decision ... **Richie Rich** defeated **Don Juan Desanto** ... **Rick Thames** defeated **Snow** in a streetfight ... **David Young** defeated **Mike Sullivan** ... **The Vandelz** defeated FOW tag team champions **Dave Johnson** & **Hack Myers** to win the title ... **Roderick Strong** & **Kamikaze Kid** won a four-way tag team elimination match against **Sederick Strong** & **Kid Lethal**, **Seijin Akki** & **Jet Jaguar**, and **Bug** & **Live Wire.**
(02-08-02)

—Kyle Nibblett

ILLINOIS

HERRIN—Attitude Championship Wrestling at the Civic Center: **Mike Riley** defeated **Velano** ... **Black Death** beat **The Outlaw** ... **A.C. Homez** defeated **Shawn Taylor** ... **Sonya Blackhawk** defeated **Moonpuppy** ... **Just Josh** beat **Lucky Dane** by disqualification ... **Tommy Calloway** beat **Scorpio** ... **Tommy Striker** defeated cruiserweight champion **Kid Dragon** to win the title ... **Tony Storm** beat **Big Bubba Floyd** and **Sgt. Kyle** in a triple threat



Christian got a win on a pay-per-view! Okay, he kind of got a win on a pay-per-view. He pinned Scotty Too Hotty to register the first elimination of the six-way tag team turmoil match at No Way Out. He and Lance Storm, however, were the next duo to be knocked out.

hardcore match ... Heavyweight champion **Steven Davis** beat **Chocolate Thunder**.
(02-23-02)

—Brad Smithson

MIDLOTHIAN—Lunatic Wrestling Federation at the Rec Center: **Havok** beat **Bill Patrick** ... **Stryc-9** & **Eric Marx** beat **Curse** & **Mini Jones** ... **Brandon Bishop** beat **Magnificent Mike** ... **The Mimic** beat **Airborne** to become inaugural independent champion ... Heavyweight champ **Ryan Boz** beat **Machine** ... **C.M. Punk** beat **Vic Capri**.
(02-02-02)

—Michelle & Rachel Nixon

INDIANA

JEFFERSONVILLE—Heartland Wrestling Association TV taping at the Davis Arena: **Shannon Moore** beat **Alex Arion** ... **Tommy Dreamer** defeated **E.Z. Money** ... **Jamie Knoble** beat **Raven** ... **The Island Boys** defeated **Steven Richards** & **Justin Credible** ... **Mike Sanders** defeated **Steve Bradley**.
(02-17-02)

—Felipe Matthews

JEFFERSONVILLE—Ohio Valley Wrestling TV taping at the Davis Arena: **Doug Basham** & **Damaja** defeated Southern tag team champs **Nick Dinsmore** & **Rob Conway** in an 30-minute "Ironman" match to win the title ... **David Flair** pinned **Mr. Black** ... **Shelton Benjamin** & **Redd Dogg** defeated **Payne** & **Big Bad John** ... **Leviathan** pinned **Sean O'Haire** ... **Flash** beat **The Prototype** by disqualification.
(02-06-02)

—Frank Miller

CHARLESTOWN—IWA Mid-South at the House of Hardcore: **Brad Bradley** defeated **Dysfunction** ... **Cash Flo** pinned **Adrian Serrano** ... **Vic Capri** beat **Colt Cabana** ... Tag team champions **Mitch Page** & **Rollin' Hard** beat **Todd Morton** & **Mitch Ryder** in a best-of-three-falls match ... Light heavyweight champion **Ace Steel** pinned **Mike Quackenbush** ... **Ian** & **Axl Rotten** defeated **Bull Pain** & **Trent Baker** in an "I Quit" match ... Heavyweight champion **C.M. Punk** beat **Chris Hero** in a tables and ladders match ... **Necro Butcher** and **Corporal Robinson** were declared co-winners in a weapons triangle match over **Madman Pondo** when both Butcher and Robinson pinned Pondo simultaneously.
(02-09-02)

—Timothy A. Walker

INDIANAPOLIS— IWA Mid-South at the Knights of Columbus Hall: **Trent Baker** beat **Richard X** ... **Cash Flo** defeated **Necro Butcher** ... **Adrian Serrano** beat **Brad Bradley** ... **Mike Quackenbush** pinned **Vic Capri** ... **Ace Steel** beat light heavyweight champion **Dysfunction** to win the title ... In a gauntlet match, heavyweight champion **C.M. Punk** beat **Colt Cabana** and **Ace Steel**, but the 45-minute time limit expired while Punk was wrestling **Chris Hero** ... **Bull Pain**, **Todd Morton**, & **Mitch Ryder** beat **Ian Rotten**, **Mitch Page**, & **Cpl. Robinson** in a four corners of pain match ... **Cash Flo** & **Rollin' Hard** defeated **Necro Butch** & **Nate Webb** in a weapons match.
(02-08-02)

—Timothy A. Walker

COLUMBUS—Hoosier Pro Wrestling at the Family Arts Center: **Jake Hogg** pinned **John York** ... **Austin James** pinned **Michael Shane** ... **The Dysfunctional Family** defeated **The Loose Screws** ... **Dave Dynasty** defeated **Jesse Houston** ... **Tiny Tim** pinned **Mike Wheeler** ... **Big Dada** & **Barlow Whatley** beat **The Dysfunctional Family** by disqualification ... **Austin James** & **Ricky Murdock** beat **Tommy Sands** & **Doug Gilbert** when Gilbert threw a fireball into Sands' face.
(02-02-02)

—Nikki Butler

Chuck and Billy didn't have much trouble with Faarooq as long as they could double-team him and as long as he was down on the canvas. When Bradshaw was able to help, things changed in a hurry. The Acolytes were the ultimate winners of the tag team turmoil match.

GREENSBURG—Wild Championship Wrestling Outlaws at the Parks Center: **Sgt. Eddie Wilson** defeated **Ray Logan** ... **The Country Boys** pinned **Shiloh Hunter** & **Jazz Hoyt** ... **Charley Boy** defeated **Drucilla Davie** ... TV champion **Don Basher** defeated **Guy Lombardo** by disqualification ... Tag team champions **Simply Marvelous** defeated **Johnny Blaze** & **Trent Lexington** ... Heavyweight champion **Dozer** wrestled **Indiana Kidd Jr.** to a double-countout.
(02-02-02)

—Randy Klemme

MARION—EWF at the EWF Arena: **Anarchy** beat **Mr. Main Event** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champion **The Big Cheez** & **Christopher Steele** beat **Hellraiser** & **Ryu Shinzaki** ... ***In a tournament for the tag team title, quarterfinal matches:*** **Grizzly** & **Jack Hammer** beat **Developmental Talent** ... **Randy Nova** & **Preston Stone** beat **Ryan Paradise** & **Snake** ... **Apollo Starr** & **Justin Fury** defeated **Brandon Prophet** & **Dayton Escobar** ... ***Semifinals:*** **The Big Cheez** & **Christopher Steele** beat **Grizzly** & **Jack Hammer** ... **Apollo Starr** & **Justin Fury** defeated **Randy Nova** & **Preston Stone** ... ***Finals:*** **The Big Cheez** & **Christopher Steele** defeated **Apollo Starr** & **Justin Fury** to become the new champions.
(02-02-02)

—John Sansone

KENTUCKY

CARLISLE—Top Rank Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Psycho Kid** beat **Redd Dog** by disqualification ... **Cousin Jed** pinned **Firehouse** ... **Psycho Kid** & **Redd Dog** defeated **The Louisville Sluggers** ... **Animal** beat **Rated X** by disqualification ... **Cousin Jed** won an eight-man battle royal to capture the vacant heavyweight title.
(02-23-02)

—Chris Smoot

FALMOUTH—Northern Wrestling Federation at St. Frances Hall: **Mr. Hayes** beat **Roger Ruffen** ... **Damien** beat **American Kickboxer** when Kickboxer injured his knee and had to forfeit the match ... **Sam Cody** beat **Moose** ... **Prince Justice** beat **The Patriot** ... **Nick Rivers** beat **Taxi** ... **Brian Beech** beat **Dregen**.
(02-02-02)

—Kirk Sheppard

LOUISIANA

LAKE CHARLES—WWF at the Civic Center: **Albert** & **Scotty Too Hotty** beat **Big Bossman** & **Mr. Perfect** ... **Booker T** beat **Rob Van Dam** ... **Bradshaw** & **Faarooq** defeated **Christian** & **Lance Storm** ... Women's champion **Jazz** pinned **Trish Stratus** ... **Triple-H** defeated **Kurt Angle** ... **Val Venis** beat **Test** ... **The Undertaker** defeated **Rikishi** ... Light heavyweight champion **X-Pac** pinned **Spike Dudley** ... **Steve Austin** pinned **Scott Hall**.
(03-02-02)

—Ray Porter

MARYLAND

HAGERSTOWN—HOPWF at the House of Pain Training Center: **Jimmy Jessup** beat **Brooklyn Panther** ... **Jesse Valentine** pinned **Jack Jackson** ... **The Freak** won a four-way dance over **Nicolas Tide**, **Chuckie Manson**, and **American Jackass** ... **Aidiean** beat **Jimmy Jessup** ... **Cashis Carter** beat **Flex Fenom** by reverse decision ... **Shorty Smalls** wrestled **Leslie Leatherman** to a double-countout ... **Latin Tornado** & **Jack Hammer** beat tag team champs **Kevin Featherstone** & **Spazman Anthony** by disqualification.
(02-02-02)

—Timothy A. Walker

MINNESOTA

ST. CLOUD—Minnesota Independent Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: TV champion **K-Train** beat **Stormwolf** ... **McCoy Counterfeit** beat **Big Daddy Hoofer** ... **Sean Stradlin** defeated **Robbie Thunder** ... **The Peacemaker** beat **The Jungle Fighter** by disqualification ... **Lauden Payne** & **Pete Huge** beat **Kamikaze** & **Chi-Town Thug** ... **Travis Sharpe** beat **Robbie Thunder** ... Cruiserweight champion **Austin Aries** beat **Justin**

At the very instant this photo was taken, it's safe to say Goldust regretted some of the things he said about Rob Van Dam and some of the sneak-attacks he launched against him in the weeks leading up to the PPV. RVD got his revenge and got the pin.

Lee ... **Chi-Town Thug** won a battle royal.
(02-16-02)

—Patrick Cooper

FRIDLEY—Minnesota Independent Wrestling at the Main Event: **Lauden Payne** & **Lacey** wrestled **Pete Huge** & **Autumn Hayze** to a no-contest ... **Big Daddy Hoofer** beat **Robbie Thunder** ... **Chuck Diesel** beat **Travis Sharpe** ... **Horace the Psychopath** beat **K-Train** by disqualification ... **Pete Huge** & **Lauden Payne** beat **Stormwolf** & **Sean Stradlin** ... **Austin Aries** beat **Justin Lee** in the finals of the cruiserweight title tournament to become the new champion ... **Horace the Psychopath** & **Chi-Town Thug** beat **Mitch Paradise** & **K-Train**.
(02-09-02)

—Patrick Cooper

MISSOURI

SPRINGFIELD—WWF at the Hammons Student Center: Cruiserweight champion **Tajiri** pinned **Billy Kidman** ... **Jacquelyn** beat **Victoria** ... **Spike Dudley** pinned **Sho Funaki** ... **Christian** defeated **Randy Orton** ... **Bradshaw** pinned **The Undertaker** ... **Brock Lesnar** pinned **Mr. Perfect** with his own feet on the ropes ... Intercontinental champion **William Regal** defeated **Edge** ... **Albert** & **Scotty Too Hotty** beat **Billy Gunn** & **Chuck Palumbo** ... **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Test**.
(02-10-02)

—Walter Fullman

ROLLA—WWF at the Gale Bollman Building: Cruiserweight champion **Tajiri** defeated **Billy Kidman** ... **Jacquelyn** defeated **Victoria** ... **Spike Dudley** beat **Sho Funaki** ... **Christian** pinned **Randy Orton** ... **Bradshaw** pinned **The Undertaker** ... **Mr. Perfect** beat **Brock Lesnar** ... **Albert** & **Scotty Too Hotty** defeated **Billy Gunn** & **Chuck Palumbo** ... Intercontinental champion **William Regal** defeated **Edge** ... **Rob Van Dam** beat **Test**.
(02-09-02)

—Fred Turner

NEVADA

LAS VEGAS—World Wrestling All-Stars Revolution pay-per-view at the Aladdin Hotel & Casino: **Nova** won a six-way elimination match, beating **Shark Boy**, **Low-Ki**, **Tony Mamaluke**, **Christopher Daniels**, and **A.J. Styles** ... **Alan Funk** pinned **Reno** ... **Kronik** defeated **Native Blood** ... **Puppet** beat **Tio** in a hardcore midget match ... **Eddie Guerrero** defeated **Psicosis** and **Juventud Guerrera** in a three-way match to win the cruiserweight title ... **Devon Storm** pinned **Sabu** ... **Ernest "The Cat" Miller** & **Rick Steiner** beat **Lenny** & **Lodi** ... Heavyweight champion **Jeff Jarrett** beat **Brian Christopher**.
(02-24-02)

—Liz Hunter

LAS VEGAS—UWF Vegas Cauliflower Alley Club special show at the UWF Annex: **Fredo** beat **Aztec Warrior Jesus** ... **Legacy** pinned **Brother William** ... **The Butcher** & **Big 2 Fuli** beat **Sinful** & **Jason Riggs** ... **Brady A. Desire** pinned **The Candyman** ... **Solo** pinned **Damien Dollaz** ... **Rush** beat **Johnny Rage** ... **Spanky** pinned **American Dragon**.
(02-08-02)

—Shaun MacMann

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MANCHESTER—WWF at the Verizon Wireless Center: **Edge** defeated **Lance Storm** ... **Mr. Perfect** pinned **Rob Van Dam** with his own feet on the ropes ... World tag team champions **Billy Gunn** & **Chuck Palumbo** beat **Albert** & **Scotty Too Hotty** ... European champion **Dallas Page** pinned **Christian** ... **Kane** pinned **Test** ... **Steve Austin** pinned **Scott Hall** ... **The Hardy Boyz** & **Lita** defeated **The Dudley Boyz** & **Jazz** ... **Booker T** defeated **Rikishi** ... **Triple-H** pinned **Kurt Angle**.
(02-24-02)

—Harry Burkett

HANOVER—Eastern Wrestling Alliance at Dartmouth College: **Alex Arion** beat **Brian Black** ... **The Egomaniacs** beat tag team champs **The Damned** to win the title ... Hardcore champion **Adam Booker** beat **Chris Venom** ... New England champion **El Tornado** beat **Chi Chi Cruz** and **K.L. Murphy** in a triple threat match ... **Rick Fuller** beat **Alex Arion** ... Heavyweight champion **Dr. Heresy** defeated **Damian Houston** ... **Larry Huntley**, **Kid Krazy**, & **Saul Rizzo** beat **Frankie Armadillo**, **Johnny Curtis**, & **Frank Rosenberg** ... **Doink the Clown** beat **Stefan Ramsey**.
(02-08-02)

—Carl Acres

NEW JERSEY

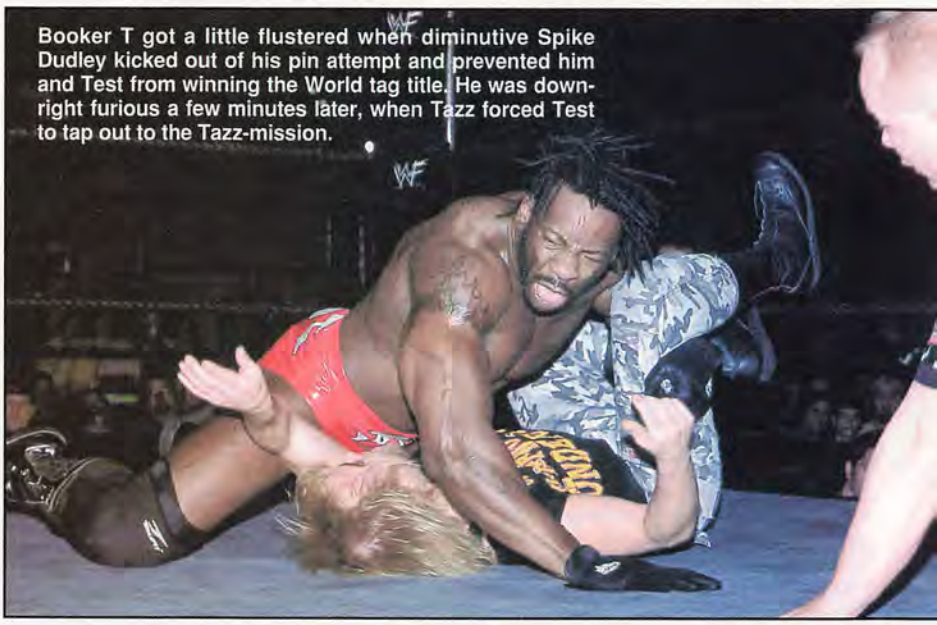
PATERSON—Stars 'n' Stripes Wrestling at the Don Bosco Technical School: **Ralph Soto** beat **Billy Bodies** ... **Ryan Wing** won a three-way match over **Orion** and **Shawn Sheridan** ... **The New NC-17** defeated **Magic** & **Suba** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... **Flash Wheeler** beat **Lucky Louie** ... **Chris Krueger** beat **Johnny Thunder** ... **Chino Martinez** defeated **Chris Candido** for the vacant heavyweight title ... **Moondog Wenzel** won an elimination match against **Tiger Mulligan** and **Inferno** ... **Crowbar** wrestled to a draw with **Sabu**.
(02-22-02)

—Dominick Valenti

TOMS RIVER—Phoenix Championship Wrestling at the Rec Center: **Red** defeated **Chris Hamrick** ... **Mike Preston** beat **Rich Myers** ... **The S.A.T.** defeated **Nikki Benz** & **Little Ricky** ... **Chi Chi Cruz** beat **Quiet Storm** ... **Christopher Daniels** defeated **Frankie Kazarian** ... **Tom Marquez** beat **The Prophet** ... **The Ballard Brothers** defeated **Johnny Kashmir** & **Matt Vandal** ... **Harley Lewis** beat **Slayer** ... **Eddie Guerrero** defeated **Nova**.
(02-22-02)

—Dominick Valenti

BAYONNE—Jersey All Pro Wrestling Russ Haas tribute show at Charity Hall: **Ghost Shadow** & **Jay Lethal** beat **Deranged** & **Rain Child** ... **The Boogie Knights** beat **Elax** & **Ric Blade** ... **Slyk Wagner Brown** pinned **Stryker** ... NWA Virginia champion **Jaycee North** beat **Chino Martinez** ... **Crazy Ivan** defeated **Seijin Akki** ... **Mike Quackenbush** & **Don Montoya** beat **The Big Unit** ... **The Hit Squad** beat **The Shane Brothers** ... **Kid Kruel** beat **Low-Ki** ... **R.C. Haas** won a three-way match against **Simon Diamond** and **Crowbar**



Booker T got a little flustered when diminutive Spike Dudley kicked out of his pin attempt and prevented him and Test from winning the World tag title. He was downright furious a few minutes later, when Tazz forced Test to tap out to the Tazz-mission.

... JAPW heavyweight champ **Dixie** won a three-way match over **Insane Dragon** and **Homicide**.
(02-02-02)

—Allison Simone

NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE—WWF at The Pit: **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** defeated **Rico Constantino** ... **Crash Holly** & **The Hurricane** beat **Lance Storm** & **Ron Waterman** ... Women's champion **Jazz** pinned **Lita** ... **Kane** pinned **Big Bossman** ... **Triple-H** defeated **Booker T** ... European champion **Dallas Page** beat **Haku** ... **The Dudley Boyz** defeated **The Hardy Boyz** in a table match ... **Rikishi** pinned **Val Venis** ... **Steve Austin** beat World champion **Chris Jericho** by disqualification after **The Dudley Boyz** interfered.
(02-09-02)

—Natalie Burke

NEW YORK

BUFFALO—WWF at the HSBC Arena: **Edge** beat **Lance Storm** ... **Mr. Perfect** pinned **Rob Van Dam** ... World tag team champions **Billy Gunn** & **Chuck Palumbo** beat **Albert** & **Scotty Too Hotty** ... **Rikishi** defeated **Booker T** ... European champion **Dallas Page** pinned **Christian** ... **Triple-H** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... **The Hardy Boyz** & **Lita** defeated **The Dudley Boyz** & **Jazz** ... **Test** pinned **Kane** ... **Steve Austin** defeated **Scott Hall**.
(02-23-02)

—Dan Murphy

SCHENECTADY—World of Hurt Wrestling at the TNT Sportatorium: **Ricky Dominguez** beat **Scott Scarsdale** ... **H.C. Loc** beat **Steve Kruz** ... Tag team champs **Moondogs Mutt** & **Mange** beat **Steve Hunter** & **Texas Outlaw** ... **Eric Everlast** beat **Maxx Burton** by disqualification ... **Shockwave** beat **Swinger Sidusky** and **Kid Krush** in a three-way match ... **Oman Tortuga** & **Diablo Santiago** beat **Brian Immaculate** & **Jamie Sommers** ... Hardcore champ **Punk** beat **Tony Militia** ... **Suisykon**, **Syro**, & **Ekundo** beat **Thornn** in a handicap match ... Heavyweight champ **Jeff Starr** beat **Vik Dalishus** ... **Danger** & **Gumby** beat **Core** & **Demonica**.
(02-22-02)

—Steve Sarvat

NORTH CAROLINA

RALEIGH—Southern Championship Wrestling at Kings Barcade: **William Wealth** beat **Skulletto** ... **Malaki** beat **Justin Drive** ... **Lazz** beat **Rico Rage** ... **Shawn Alexander** & **Brad Hunter** beat **Scab** & **Seymour Snott** ... **C.W. Anderson** & **Cham Pain** beat **Lodi** & **Ali Steele** ... **Otto Schwanz** beat **Dewey Cheatum**.
(02-28-02)

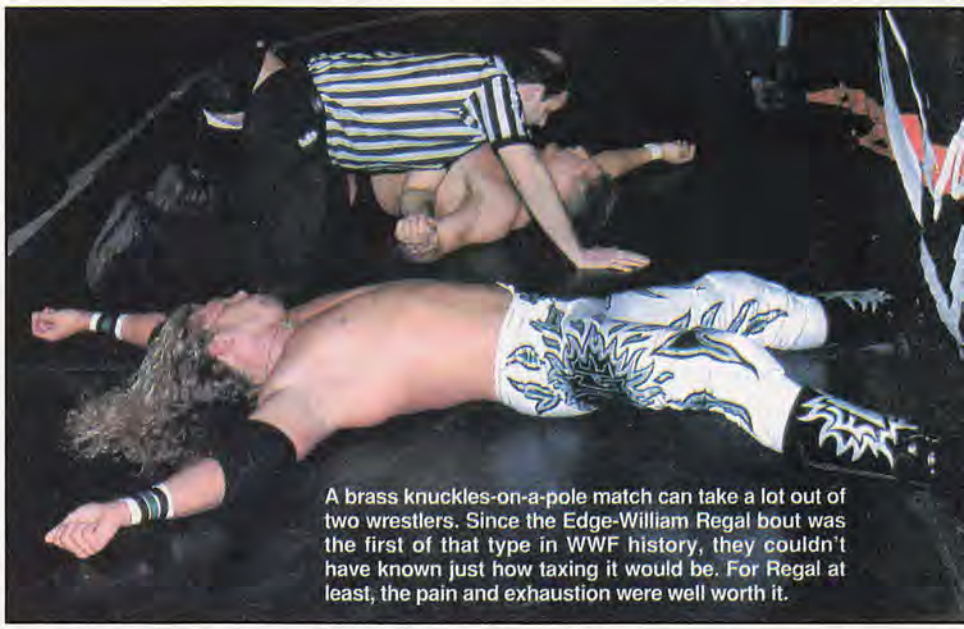
—Greg Mosorjak

GRAHAM—CWF/FWA-Carolinas at the Graham Recreation Center: **Rob McBride** & **Ric Converse** defeated **The Kamikaze Duo** ... **Granite** & **The Amazing Sideshow** defeated **L.A. Stevens** & **The Canadian Assassins** in a handicap match ... FWA women's champion **Amber Holly** pinned **GeeStar** ... **C.W. Anderson** & **Cham Pain** defeated **Jeff Justice** & **Steel** ... Tag team champions **The Southside Playas** defeated **The Storm Brothers** ... **Sexton Tyler** defeated **Gemini Kid** and **Mikael Yamaha** in a triangle elimination match to win the CWF/FWA-Carolinas cruiserweight title ... **Madd Maxx** pinned **Otto Schwanz** in a falls-count-anywhere match.
(02-23-02)

—Grant Sawyer

NEWTON—North American Championship Wrestling at the Rec Center: **Brad Hunter** wrestled **Eddie Golden** to a 20-minute draw ... **The Original Masked Superstar** wrestled **Rick Link** to a double-disqualification ... **Sevar the Bounty Hunter** & **Carnage** beat **King Konga** & **The Latin Lover** ... Carolinas champion **Lord Everett Devore** beat **Jim Tucker** ... **Big Wood** & **Big Daddy** beat **Black Angel** & **Rev. Slim** ... **Norman Smiley** beat **Bobby Eaton** ... **Rick Morton** beat **The Barbarian** in a steel cage match.
(02-08-02)

—Dan Parris



A brass knuckles-on-a-pole match can take a lot out of two wrestlers. Since the Edge-William Regal bout was the first of that type in WWF history, they couldn't have known just how taxing it would be. For Regal at least, the pain and exhaustion were well worth it.

OHIO

HEBRON—New Wave Wrestling's "Last Call" at Lakewood Middle School: Extreme champion **Bane** beat **Vertigo** ... **J.C. Blayze** won the vacant light heavyweight title by defeating **Jack Diamond** ... **Damien Black** pinned **Jowe Thumbs** ... **The Gravediggers** defeated **Max Carnage** & **Deacon Cross** ... Tag team champions **The Insane Turkey Posse** beat **Crane** & **Big D** ... Inner city champion **Pyro** beat **Joe Joe Little** by disqualification ... **Fear Effect** defeated **Suicidal Tendencies** and **Maximum Rage** in a three-way TLC match.
(02-02-02)

—Steve Spears

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA—Ring of Honor at the Murphy Rec Center: **Da Hit Squad** defeated **The Christopher St. Connection** ... **Red** beat **Jay Briscoe** ... **Xavier** defeat **Scoot Andrews** ... **The Boogie Knights** beat **Homicide** & **Boogalou** by disqualification ... **Quiet Storm** won the ultimate aerial elimination match over **Joel Maximo**, **Jose Maximo**, **Chris Devine**, **Brian XL**, and **Red** ... **Prince Nana** beat **Eric Tuttle** ... **Spanky** & **Ikaika Loa** beat **Michael Shane** & **Oz** ... **Super Crazy** beat **Eddie Guerrero** to become the first-ever IWA Intercontinental champion ... **Low-Ki** won a three-way match against **Christopher Daniels** and **American Dragon**.
(02-23-02)

—Keith Harington

PHILADELPHIA—Liberty All-Star Wrestling at the Murphy Rec Center: **Maverick** won a three-way match against **Patch** and **Mongoose** ... **Iggy Rose** defeated **Ron Starr** ... **Greg Spitz** & **Mark Smart** defeated **Breaker Morant** & **Adam Michaels** ... Tag team champs **The Rockin' Rebel** & **Jimmy Jannetty** defeated **The Backseat Boyz** ... **Larry Winters** defeat **Tony Stetson** ... **Nick Berk** beat light heavyweight champ **White Lotus** to win the title ... Heavyweight champ **Al Perez** beat **Steve Corino**.
(02-16-02)

—Gary Franks

PHILADELPHIA— Combat Zone Wrestling at Viking Hall: **Chris Cash** defeated **GQ** ... **Quiet Storm** wrestled **Nick Berk** to a 15-minute time-limit draw ... **Kenny** & **Keno Murdoch** defeated **Chris Stylz** & **Ian Knoxx** ... **Adam Flash** & **Danny Rose** defeated **Greg Matthews** & **Ruckus** ... **The Messiah** defeated **Nick Mondo** ... Tag team champions **Trent Acid** & **Johnny Kashmere** defeated **The Ballard Brothers** ... Heavyweight champion **Justice Pain** defeated **Nick Gage** ... **Lobo** defeated **Zandig** to win ownership of CZW.
(02-09-02)

—Dennis Carter

PITTSBURGH—International Wrestling Cartel at Club Laga: **Kid Sensation** defeated **Devil Bhudakahn** ... **Jimmy Vegas** pinned **Julio Dinero** ... **Scottie Gash**, **J-Ru**, & **T. Rantula** beat **Eric Xtasy**, **J.T. Rodgers**, & **Troy Lords** ... High stakes champion **Shirley Doe** pinned **Super Hentai** ... Heavyweight champion **Orion** pinned **Steve Corino** ... **Boomer Payne** pinned **The Sandman**.
(02-20-02)

—Cody Ladd

UNIONTOWN—International Wrestling Cartel at the VFW: **Troy Lords** defeated **Trevor Lowe** ... **J-Ru** & **Scottie Gash** beat **Eric Xtasy** & **J.T. Rodgers** to win the belts ... High stakes champion **Shirley Doe** defeated **Kid Sensation** ... **The Blue Meanie** pinned **The Sandman** ... **Super Hentai** pinned **Devil Bhudakahn** ... Heavyweight champion **Orion** pinned **Jimmy Vegas** ... **The Sandman** beat **Boomer Payne** in a thumbtack death match.
(02-16-02)

—Cody Ladd

BOYERTOWN—IWF-IWA at the IWA Cruel School: **Shawn Donavan** & **Pierce St. John** defeated **Elroy Fiesta** & **J.D. Powers** ... **Hadrian** pinned **Dylan Black** ... **Bax** pinned **Freight Train** ... **Din Mak** pinned **Tony Reyes** ... **Colin Cash** &

The Undertaker has never been more vicious than he has been so far in 2002. Good thing The Rock knew what he was getting into when he signed to face him. He dealt with 'Taker's ruthlessness quite well and rallied to score an impressive win.

Felix Leon defeated **Erik Andretti** & **John Royal** ... **Psycho** defeated **Rob Eckos** by disqualification ... IWF heavyweight champion **Roman** pinned IWA light heavyweight champion **Damian Adams** in a non-title match.
(02-09-02)

—Jeff Wilson

HAZLETON—World Xtreme Wrestling at WXW Arena: **Shawn Sheridan** pinned **Crazy Bob** ... **Lord Fergusson** pinned **Billy Body** ... **Tommy Suede** pinned **Nicky Ice** ... **Wenzel** beat **Billy Dream** by disqualification ... **Mad Russian** pinned **Brymmstone** ... **Zero Gravity** beat **Philthy Phil** by submission ... **Supreme Lee Great** wrestled **Shane Black** to a double-disqualification ... **Big Willy** pinned **The One Andy Onnly** ... **Poppa Pete** beat **Lucifer Grimm** by submission ... **Eric Cobian** pinned **Havoc** ... **Big Dawg Molsonn** beat **Nuisance** by disqualification ... **Jersey Devil** pinned **Tiger Mulligan** ... **Samu, Lynn Anoai,** & **Inferno** beat **Dylan Dean, Gene Snisky,** & **Tommy Suede.**
(02-02-02)

—Eric Shaffer

McKEESPORT—NWA East at the NWA Sportatorium: **Axl Law** pinned **Dale Price** ... **Mike Macgowan** defeated **ODB** ... **J-Ru** defeated **Kid Ego** by submission ... **Stacy Hunter** defeated **Katerina Heiss** ... **Grace Divine** beat **Stacy Hunter** ... **Katerina Heiss** defeated **Grace Divine** ... **Bison** & **Rapture** defeated tag team champs **Axel Law** & **Scott Venom** to win the title ... **Sean Styles** & **Kid Cupid** defeated **White Trash Hero** & **Lance Dayton** ... Triple crown champ **Dirk Ciglar** defeated **Paul Atlas** by disqualification ... **Brandon K** defeated **Crusher Hansen** and **Homicyde.**
(02-01-02)

—Jesse Kovak

TENNESSEE

BRISTOL—Southern States Wrestling's 11th anniversary show at the National Guard Armory: **Dewayne Holiday** beat **Steinbrenner** ... **David Payne** beat **Mighty Yankee II** ... TV champion **Ray Idol** pinned **Frank Parker** ... **Andy Douglas** beat **Steve Flynn** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champion **Beau James** & **Brian Overbay** beat **The New York Assassins** ... **Ray Idol** and **David Payne** co-won a cyclone stampede.
(02-23-02)

—Fay Ferguson

EAST RIDGE—UEW at the UEW Building: **Jeff Bowman Sr.** wrestled to a 10-minute draw with **Rocky Starr** ... **Skunk** defeated **Danny Marlow** ... **Jason Phoenix** beat **Fajing** ... **Jeff Bowman Sr., Jeff Bowman Jr.,** & **Drew Game** defeated **Chuckie Chuck, Ben Thrasher,** & **Drew Delight** ... **"Skinny" Kenny Arden** & **Big Wood** beat **Twiggy** & **Alex Pain** ... **Rawhead Rex** defeated **Tank Norton.**
(02-23-02)

—Justin Ramey

EAST RIDGE—UEW at the UEW Building: **Twiggy** defeated **Ben Thrasher** ... **Jason Phoenix** defeated **Fajing** by disqualification ... **Rawhead Rex** & **Skull** beat **LeRoy Lewis** & **Tommy Steele** ... **Jeff Bowman Sr.** & **Rush** beat **"Skinny" Kenny Arden** & **Big Wood** ... **David Kyle** defeated **Jeff Bowman Jr.** ... **Drew Delight** & **Ben Thrasher** defeated **Chuckie Chuck** & **Drew Game.**
(02-09-02)

—Justin Ramey

KINGSPORT—Southern States Wrestling's 11th anniversary show at the National Guard Armory: **Steinbrenner** won a four-way match against **Dewayne Holiday, Andy Douglas,** and **Marty Gibson** ... **David Payne** beat **The Mighty Yankee** ... **Ray Idol** beat TV champion **Allen King** by forfeit ... TV champion **Ray Idol** beat **Steinbrenner** ... **Equalizer** & **Chic White** wrestled **Roger Anderson** & **Frank Parker** to a double-disqualification ... **Steve Flynn** beat **John Noble** ... Heavyweight-champion **Beau James** beat Appalachian champion **Ricky Harrison** for the title ... **The Mighty Yankee** won a cyclone stampede, last eliminating **Beau James** after **Steve Flynn** kayoed James with brass knuckles
(02-22-02)

—Fay Ferguson

KNOXVILLE—SECW at Carter High School: **Bobby Blassie** beat **Kidd Krazzy** ... **The Rocky Top Hillbilly** pinned **Menace** ... **Johnny Raynor** wrestled **Powerhouse Pete** to a double-countout ... **Mike** & **Chris Powers** wrestled **Jeff** & **David Anderson** to a no-contest ... **Deke Rivers** beat **Jackie Reed** ... **Powerhouse Pete** won a battle royal.
(02-02-02)

—Patrick Pebley

TEXAS

FORT WORTH—WWF at the Convention Center: **Albert** & **Scotty Too Hotty** beat **Big Bossman** & **Mr. Perfect** ... **Booker T** pinned **Rob Van Dam** after **Test** interfered ... **The Undertaker** defeated **Rikishi** ... Women's champion **Jazz** pinned **Trish Stratus** ... **Triple-H** defeated **Kurt Angle** ... Light heavyweight champion **X-Pac** pinned **Spike Dudley** ... **Bradshaw** & **Faarooq** beat **Christian** & **Lance Storm** ... **Val Venis** defeated **Test** after **Rob Van Dam** interfered ... **Steve Austin** pinned **Scott Hall.**
(03-03-02)

—Dwayne Carmen

LUBBOCK—XWF at the Fair Park Coliseum: **Tony T** beat **Jimmy Hart** ... **Buff Bagwell** defeated **Johnny B. Badd** ... **Kid Kash** beat **Josh Matthews** ... **Norman Smiley** & **Little Jeannie** beat **Simon Diamond** & **Dawn Marie** ... **The Wall** defeated **The British Storm** ... **Vampiro** beat **Hail** ... **Terry Funk** defeated **Greg Valentine** ... **Konnan** & **Rey Misterio Jr.** beat **The Nasty Boys.**
(02-23-02)

—Greg Stevens

Since Triple-H still hasn't shaken off all of the ring rust that accumulated during his seven-month hiatus, Kurt Angle was smart to try to extend the match as long as possible by using weardown holds such as the sleeper. Still, Triple-H probably would have won if not for his estranged wife, Stephanie, who was the guest referee.

AMARILLO—XWF at the Amarillo National Center: **Buff Bagwell** defeated **Johnny B. Badd** ... **Kid Kash** beat **Josh Matthews** ... **Norman Smiley** pinned **Simon Diamond** ... **The Wall** pinned **The British Storm** ... **Konnan** & **Rey Misterio Jr.** beat **The Nasty Boys** ... **Terry Funk** defeated **Greg Valentine** ... **Vampiro** pinned **Hail.**
(02-22-02)

—Steve Drew

CRANDLE—Star Wrestling Federation at the SWF Arena: **Tim Swiney** defeated **Destiny** & **Fair Kitty** ... **Dave the Rave** beat **Cody Knight** ... **Scorpion** defeated **The Widowmaker** ... **Curtis T** beat **Isaiah** ... **Big Papa Jones** defeated **Kris Kaos** ... **Max Muscles** defeated **Justin Walker** ... **Smash** beat **Ray Evans** for the Texas title.
(02-16-02)

—Darren H. Evans

EL PASO—WWF at the Don Haskins Center: **Crash Holly** & **The Hurricane** defeated **Lance Storm** & **Ron Waterman** ... Women's champion **Jazz** pinned **Lita** ... **Kane** pinned **Big Bossman** ... **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** beat **Rico Constantino** ... **Triple-H** pinned **Booker T** ... European champion **Dallas Page** defeated **Haku** by disqualification ... **The Dudley Boyz** beat **The Hardy Boyz** in a table match ... **Rikishi** beat **Val Venis** ... **Steve Austin** defeated World champion **Chris Jericho** by disqualification.
(02-10-02)

—Michael Harding

ARLINGTON—Professional Championship Wrestling at the PCW Arena: **The K.E.G. Brothers** beat **Jared Steele, Shadrick,** & **Chance Romance** ... **A.B. Richter** beat **Largus Black** ... **Jimmy Budd** beat **Bull** ... **Zane Morris** beat **Jeromy Sage** ... TV champion **Shadow** beat **Paul London** ... Heavyweight champion **Mike Foxx** beat **Chris Chronic.**
(02-09-02)

—Brent Plumlee

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS—NWA Southwest Wrestling at the Texas Indoor Arena: **J.P. Black** & **Mike Thunder** beat NWA Texas tag champs **Al Jackson** & **Hellraiser Hark** (substituting for the injured **Mike Anthony**) to win the title ... **Brett Bonz** pinned **Fast Eddie** ... **Bobby 2 Badd** pinned **Jimbo Starr** ... **Devastator** pinned **Psycho Simpson** ... **Chaz Taylor** pinned **John Allen.**
(02-08-02)

—Rob Moore

TROUP—New Age Wrestling Alliance at the Community Center: **Gemini** beat **Big Jon Murder** ... **Drunk Adam** beat **Great Hurtado** ... **Sassy McBottom** beat **Greg Hill** by disqualification ... **Kevin Kincaid** beat **Willian Ferrer** ... Heavyweight champion **Joey Corman** wrestled **Samir** to a double-countout.
(02-02-02)

—Mike Hollingswood

WASHINGTON

TACOMA— International Championship Wrestling at the Temple Theater: **Steven Rush** defeated **The Masked Messiah** ... **Ritchie Magnett** & **Buddy Wayne** defeated **Steven Rush** & **Shoulders Torelli** ... **Moose** pinned **Sloth** ... **Taj Nahal** beat **C.C. Poison** ... **Jimbo Ono** defeated **Nasty Nate** ... **Punk Rock Prod** beat **Chico Alvarez** and **Teenage Dirtbag** in a three-way dance ... **Roach Redding** beat **Blaze Daily** by countout ... **Mean Mark** & **Sadistic Sony** beat **Mr. GQ** & **Zig** for the tag team title. Senior referee **Bobby Hawthorne** reversed the decision, saying that the man who was pinned, Mr. GQ, was not the legal man. As Hawthorne argued with the referee of the match, **Jay Wunder**, ICW Commissioner **Craig Thorne** came out and declared the title vacant ... **Avalanche** won a three-way hardcore match against **Chino** and **Tim Flowers.**
(02-15-02)

—Dustin Nichols

Although it's no secret that Steve Austin has bad knees, Chris Jericho chose to target his left arm for a while during No Way Out's main event. Whatever strategy he was employing worked, for he pulled out another somewhat unlikely successful World title defense.

WEST VIRGINIA

OAK HILL—Applachia Pro Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Big Daddy Gordy** defeated **J.V. Insanity** ... **Kid Apollo** defeated **Shane Matthews** by disqualification ... **Frank Parker** beat **Chet Cartwright** ... **Scotty McKeever** beat **Scotty Blaze** ... **The Urban Death Squad** beat **The West Virginia Wrestling Crew** by disqualification.
(02-28-02)

—Dominick Valenti

WEIRTON—In Your Face Wrestling at Bishop's Dojo: **Glenn Spectre** defeated **Devil Bhudakhan** ... **Curt Fury** won a four-corners match against **The Unknown, Jason Thunder,** and **Darkstar** to become the new cruiserweight champion ... **Joey Ludacris** defeated **Twitch** to become the new TV champion ... **The Untouchables** defeated **Sgt. Jason Williams** & **Big Daddy** ... **The Bouncer** defeated **Van Hughes** ... Tag team champs **B.J. Miracle** & **Justin Idol** defeated **Carnage.**
(02-01-02)

—Bob Browne

WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY—WWF at the Brown County Expo Center: **Rikishi** defeated **Mr. Perfect** ... **Brock Lesnar** & **Leviathan** beat **Randy Orton** & **Shelton Benjamin** ... Women's champion **Jazz** pinned **Lita** ... **Sho Funaki** beat **Perry Saturn** ... **Kane** pinned **Big Bossman** ... European champion **Dallas Page** defeated **Val Venis** ... World tag team champions **Spike Dudley** & **Tazz** beat **Booker T** & **Test** ... Intercontinental champion **William Regal** beat **Edge** in a no-disqualification match ... **The Hardy Boyz** won a six-way tag team turmoil match, last defeating **Billy Gunn** & **Chuck Palumbo.**
(02-16-02)

—Will Welsh

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA—ECCW/NWA Pacific Northwest at Beban Park Centennial Building: **The Cremator** pinned **Bob Brown Jr.** ... **Skag Rollins** pinned **Sweet Daddy Devastation** ... **Bam Bam Bambi** defeated **Buffy** and **Madison** in a three-way ladies match ... **Wrathchild** pinned hardcore champion **Moondog Manson** to win the title ... ... **Havoc** & **Scotty Mac** defeated **Seth Knight** & **Skag Rollins.**
(02-23-02)

—Todd Baumgartner

TORONTO, ONTARIO—Apocalypse Wrestling Federation at Cactus Pete's: **Slade** & **Joey Knight** defeated **James Champagne** & **The Squeegee Kid** ... **Billy Flynn** beat **Jaguar Vijay Singh** by reverse decision ... **Phoenix** won a three-way match against **La Felina** and **Tracy** ... **Charlie Brown** beat **James Champagne** for the heavyweight championship. However, when **Brown** wouldn't unmask, his victory was overturned and the title was held up ... **Arizona** beat **Shawn King** ... **Vladimir Urkov** pinned **Masamune** ... **Danny Dynamic** & **Mark Menezes** beat **P.P. Smalls** & **Kevin Grace.**
(02-10-02)

—Ron Hutchinson

JAPAN

YOKOHAMA—WWF at Yokohama Arena: Intercontinental champion **William Regal** pinned **Edge** ... **Lita** defeated **Mighty Molly** ... European champion **Dallas Page** pinned **Haku** ... **Sho Funaki** beat **The Hurricane** ... World tag team champions **Billy Gunn** & **Chuck Palumbo** defeated **The Hardy Boyz** ... Cruiserweight champion **Tajiri** beat **Billy Kidman (Dean Malenko** was the guest referee) ... **The Big Show** & **Kane** beat **The Dudley Boyz** ... World champion **Chris Jericho** pinned **The Rock.**
(03-01-02)

—Koichi Yoshizawa

PWI classic

From the December 1996 issue

THE TRUTH HURTS:

HULK HOGAN IS RIGHT!

Hulk Hogan shocked the world with his actions and comments at Bash at the Beach. The comments were outrageous, maybe even scandalous. But worst of all, they may have been right on the money!

"Will Hogan Join Diesel And Ramon?"

—Headline in *PWI Weekly*, mailed to subscribers June 26, 1996

"You can't handle the truth!"

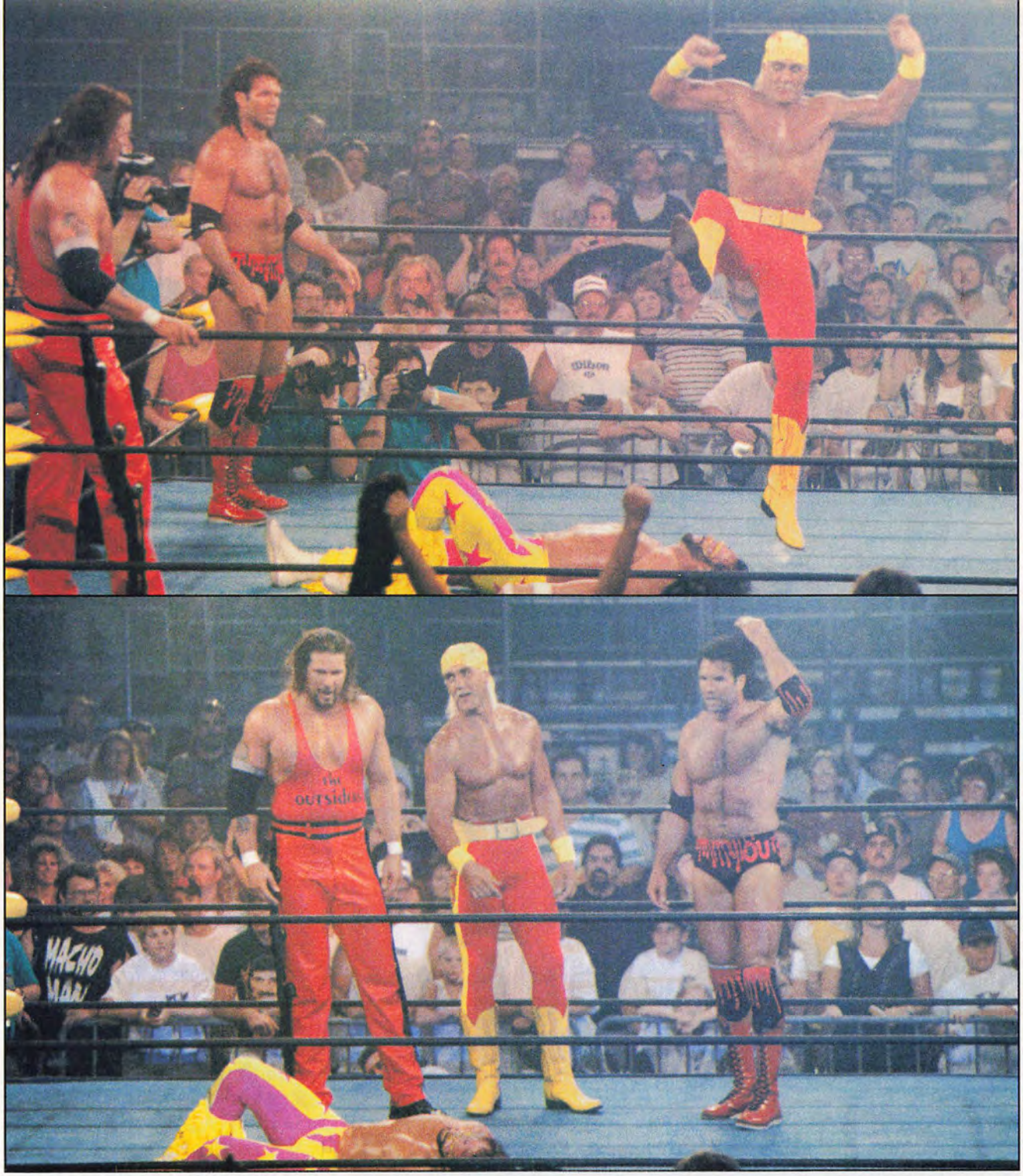
—Jack Nicholson, in the movie *A Few Good Men*

By Steve Anderson

IT MIGHT ALWAYS reign as the biggest story ever in wrestling. July 7, 1996. Every wrestling fan will remember where he was when he saw the event or heard the news.

Hulk Hogan turned rulebreaker. It was the legdrop heard 'round the world.

And if we all thought Hogan leg-dropping a fallen Randy Savage three times while Kevin Nash and Scott Hall urged him on was bad enough, Hogan made things much worse just minutes later when he lambasted his fans, his friends, and his employer. We have seen many men turn against Hogan and spew out similar diatribes, but we never thought we would hear those words from the "Hulkster" himself.



No one could believe it: Hulk Hogan joined The Outsiders in the ring at Bash at the Beach 1996 and repeatedly legdropped Randy Savage (top), then just laughed as the crowd showered all of them with boos and garbage (above).

But while those words shook us, we must ask ourselves this: Was Hogan that far off the mark with his remarks? Perhaps what hurts most about his venomous soliloquy was that he was speaking the truth. We just didn't want to hear it.

The following is a breakdown of the Bash at the Beach speech made by Hogan, plus our analysis of the stunning words.

* * *

"And everybody was wondering who the third man was? Well, who knows more about [the WWF] than me, brother?!"

Perhaps we should have known all along. When Scott Hall and Kevin Nash "invaded" WCW, they were too confident. Too reckless. They walked around as if they owned the place. They didn't. But they had allied themselves with the guy who practically owned the place.

Hall and Nash said they had a third man who would help them take over WCW. While they weren't repre-

Rey Misterio Jr.

PWI ratings

December 1996

TOP 10
1. The Giant
2. Shawn Michaels
3. Vader
4. The Undertaker
5. Lex Luger
6. Steve Austin
7. Randy Savage
8. Ric Flair
9. Sting
10. Rey Misterio Jr.

TAG TEAMS
1. Harlem Heat
2. The Smokin' Gunns
3. Rick & Scott Steiner
4. Scott Hall & Kevin Nash
5. Lex Luger & Sting
6. Skip & Zip
7. The Gangstas
8. The Nasty Boys
9. The Eliminators
10. Brickhouse Brown & Reggie B. Fine

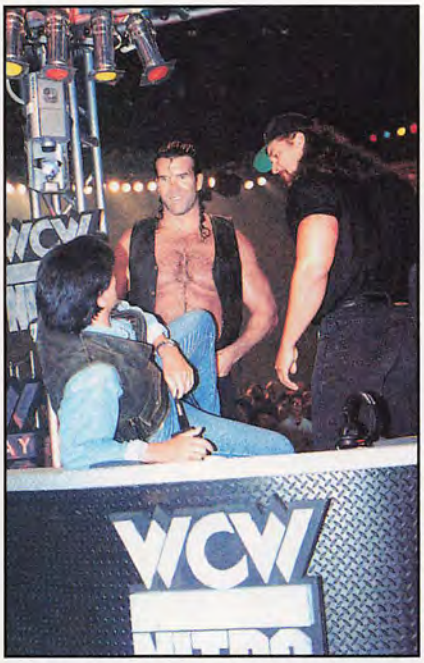
WCW
World champion: The Giant
1. Ric Flair
2. Sting
3. Randy Savage
4. Lex Luger
5. Eddie Guerrero
6. Rey Misterio Jr.
7. Dean Malenko
8. Bubba Rogers
9. Sgt. Craig Pittman
10. Hacksaw Duggan

WWF
World champion: Shawn Michaels
1. Ahmed Johnson
2. Vader
3. The Undertaker
4. Faarooq
5. Yokozuna
6. Steve Austin
7. Sid Vicious
8. Davey Boy Smith
9. Goldust
10. Mankind

ECW
Heavyweight champion: Raven
1. Shane Douglas
2. The Sandman
3. 2 Cold Scorpio
4. Sabu
5. Pit Bull II
6. Taz
7. Brian Lee
8. Tommy Dreamer
9. Chris Jericho
10. Rob Van Dam

MOST POPULAR
1. Shawn Michaels
2. Sting
3. Sid Vicious
4. Lex Luger
5. The Undertaker
6. Randy Savage
7. Ahmed Johnson
8. Rey Misterio Jr.
9. Jake Roberts
10. Eddie Guerrero

MOST HATED
1. Hulk Hogan
2. Faarooq
3. Kevin Nash
4. Scott Hall
5. Mankind
6. Jerry Lawler
7. Vader
8. The Giant
9. Steve McMichael
10. Steve Austin



The NWO invasion began when Scott Hall and Kevin Nash began to intimidate Eric Bischoff at the broadcasters' desk in the spring of 1996. Little did anyone know that the mysterious third man to whom they referred would turn out to be Hogan.

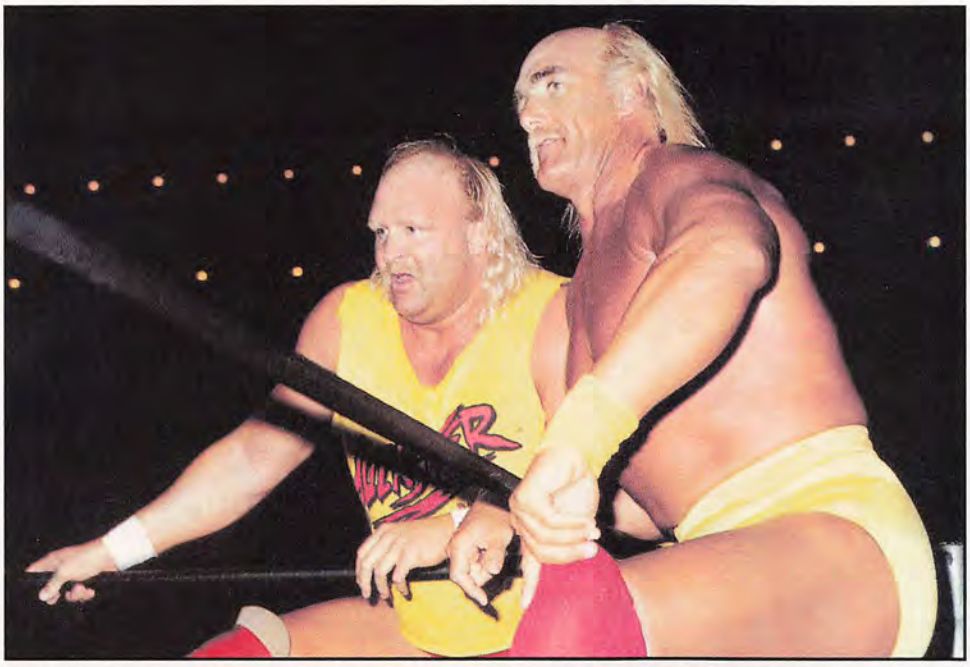
senting the WWF, they had apparently grown tired of some of the comments Eric Bischoff had made about their former federation, and, by association, their accomplishments in that federation. They needed someone just as bitter. That's what they sought out and found in Hogan.

* * *

"I made [the WWF] a monster ... I made the people that ran that organization rich up there."

Wrestling can be separated into two eras. Before Hogan and After Hogan. On January 24, 1984, Hulk Hogan legdropped The Iron Sheik to win his first WWF World title. Wrestling subsequently enjoyed a business boom that has yet to be surpassed. Gone were the male-dominated, smoke-filled arenas. In came rock 'n' roll and family-oriented sports entertainment.

All of this was ushered in by Hulk Hogan. He appeared on talk shows. He appeared in movies and in Saturday morning cartoons. He became a mainstream celebrity. Like him or hate him, Hogan represented a renaissance that will never be matched.



Out of the goodness of his heart, Hogan tried to help a simpleton like Dave Sullivan progress in WCW in 1994, and how did the people reward him?

* * *

"And when it all came to pass, the name Hulk Hogan, the man Hulk Hogan, got bigger than the whole organization."

Wrestling became Hulk Hogan. While the WWF was the premier promotion, Hogan was by far its most recognizable and marketable personality. The WWF became the backdrop to the five-time WWF World titleholder.

He tried to take hiatuses from wrestling. But even when he was gone, he was still the focus of attention. Everyone wondered when he would come back. Whenever someone else held the WWF title, he was compared to Hogan. Everyone wondered when he'd get the belt back. His popularity waned in recent years, but he was still wrestling's biggest name.

* * *

"I held my head high. I did everything for the charities. I did everything for the kids. And the reception I got when I came out here ... You fans can stick it."

Hogan checked his ego at the door when it came to children and needy causes. He signed autographs at promotional events for hours without complaint. He posed for pictures with mentally and physically challenged kids. He was a cheerleader for people in need. And he hoped and prayed others would follow his lead.

But the Teflon on Hogan started to chip away. A few fans got sick of him and started to boo. When he entered WCW, the former outsider received a chilly reception in some of the cities in which Ric Flair was treated like a king. It was also becoming chic to cheer rulebreakers and jeer fan favorites. Hogan had not changed. The fans had changed. So had wrestling.

* * *

"If it wasn't for Hulk Hogan, you people wouldn't be here."

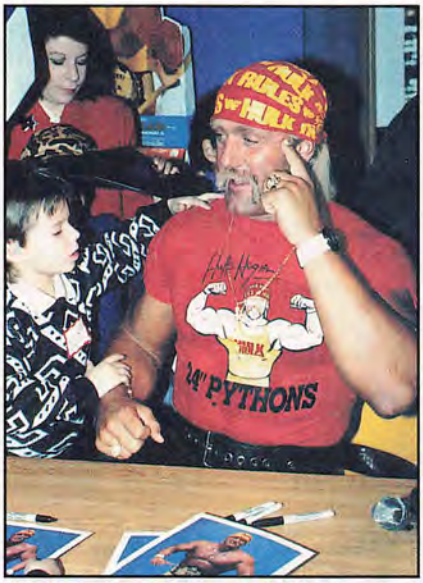
While some would call that wishful thinking, Hogan made wrestling popular. He introduced a new generation of fans to wrestling. Some of the fans who booed Hogan in recent years wouldn't have been fans in the first place if Hogan hadn't made wrestling so popular in the 1980s.

* * *

"If it wasn't for Hulk Hogan, Eric Bischoff would be still selling meat from a truck in Minneapolis."

While this may seem to be a throwaway line by a bitter man, it's

Former heavyweight boxing champ George Foreman was happy to work out and pose with Hogan as both wore the yellow and red. The dark, bitter side of his personality was not on display here.



How much time did Hogan devote to kids who idolized him over the years? More hours than anyone could ever try to add up. Could we really blame him for being bitter when the fans started to turn against him?

true that Bischoff has enjoyed more success than any WCW senior vice president in recent memory. He has done a masterful job building WCW into the successful promotion it is today. But it wasn't until Bischoff lured Hogan to WCW that the promotion really took off. Business got better. Other superstars followed Hogan to WCW.

That statement was a gross exaggeration, but point well-taken.

* * *

"If it wasn't for Hulk Hogan, all these Johnny-come-latelies that you see out here wrestling wouldn't be here. I was selling out the world while they were bumming gas to put in their car to get to high school."

While Hulk Hogan converted fans, his main claim to fame is his influence on an entire faction of professional wrestlers. The Ultimate Warrior, Sting, Lex Luger, and a litany of others show the influence of Hulk Hogan. That used to be something of which they could be proud.

* * *

"Whatcha gonna do when the New World Order of Wrestling runs wild on you?"

We'll see. But with a bad Hulk Hogan ruling wrestling, that future looks ominous. □

PWI, December 1996

The cover: Of course Hulk Hogan was the cover subject. A story like that deserved a cover. Featured less prominently was a photo of The Undertaker and manager Paul Bearer. In the accompanying story, we listed reasons why we thought they should split, with Bearer signing on with Mankind, 'Taker's arch-rival. 'Taker had just come off a disappointing loss to Mankind, one in which Bearer's mistimed interference cost him. A few months later, said split did happen, Bearer did hook up with Mankind, and all three did benefit.

The centerfold: "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin wasn't a white-hot superstar six years ago, but he was a big enough star to be featured in our centerfold. It was about a year later that he became the WWF's hottest commodity. Can't remember the days when Austin was a WWF midcarder? Consider this: We listed his favorite maneuver at the time as the Million-Dollar dream, his greatest match as his WCW U.S. title win over Dustin Rhodes, and his most hated opponent as Savio Vega. A lot can change in six years!

The Other Colonel's Secret Recipe: To many WCW fans, Col. Rob Parker was anything but a genius in 1996. He was the Southern blowhard manager of Booker T and Stevie Ray, the WCW tag champs, but the only reason his men were champs was that he knew just when and how to interfere. Our sources discovered there was more to it. We learned that he placed great emphasis on diet, exercise, and conditioning, and that there was a secret "ingredient" to Harlem Heat's success. We never found out what that was, though.

Good Luck With That: Ahmed Johnson wanted to get revenge against Goldust for using mouth-to-mouth to "revive" him after he was knocked unconscious. He did it by winning the I-C title from him. So his new goal was to scare Goldust straight. That is, to find a way to intimidate Goldust into forsaking all the bizarre and lewd mind games he played. Different people had different opinions on how he should go about trying to do this, and although Johnson dominated the feud, he never accomplished this goal.

Sting Is Steamed: Sting was given many a reason to get angry during his career, but we never saw him more furious than he was on the day he sat down to discuss Hulk Hogan's creation of the NWO. He called it "the ultimate betrayal." He even said he'd be willing to team with The Giant, a man he hated, if that's what it'd take to bring down the NWO. Just two months later, after being falsely accused of conspiring with the NWO, Sting stopped talking and began lurking in the rafters of arenas.

HE'S THE ROCK, STEVE AUSTIN, & ROB VAN DAM ROLLED INTO ONE...HE'S THE GRANDEST WIZARD!

HE'S MJ —MICHAEL JORDAN!

PREMIER EVENTS PRESENTS

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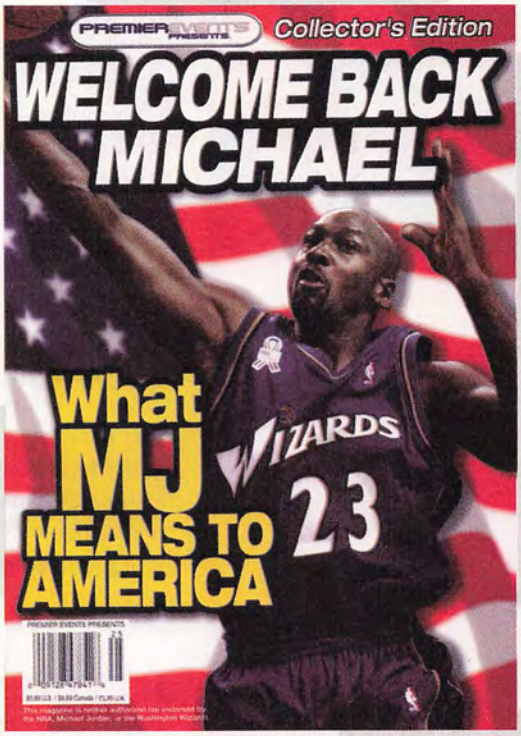

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LOOKING *WAY* AHEAD

Did we really label WrestleMania X-8 "the Mania to end all Manias" on the cover of the May 2002 issue of *PWI*? Indeed we did. With the NWO arriving and the split of the WWF into two promotions just waiting to happen, it was a huge card. And our question about what wrestling would look like by WrestleMania X-9 was a crucial one. We've received a lot of feedback on it.

"It's tough to predict what wrestling will look like a month from now, let alone a year," e-mailed Mike Franz of Jackson, Mississippi. "One thing I don't see happening is the NWO lasting more than a few months."

"I think the WWF will be much stronger once it splits," wrote Bill Keenan of Auburn, New York. "It'll give some new guys a chance to blossom into stars. I think the industry as a whole will strengthen by this time next year."

"When I first heard about this split, I didn't think it would work, and I still don't," wrote Ty Flannigan of Herb Lake, Manitoba. "I don't think things will change that much, but I do think you'll see some OVW guys become stars by WrestleMania X-9."

TALKING "500" ALREADY?

We're about halfway through this year's grading period for the *"PWI* 500," and so far the top spot still seems to be up for grabs. Chris Jericho, who unified the WWF and WCW world titles, is wrestling opening matches on *Smackdown*. Steve Austin can't do much more than ask the ancient question of "What?!" The Rock hasn't done much of anything since he regained the WCW title in November. Triple-H missed the first five months of the grading period.

I'd say this is all very good for wrestling fans because it adds an aura of mystery to who number one will be. I'm leaning toward Edge for next year. Say what you will about his losses to Christian, Test, Kurt Angle, and Rob Van Dam, but remember, he's beaten all of them decisively, along with the likes of Kane and William Regal. Edge never went more than a month without the I-C title after defeating Lance Storm at SummerSlam, and his unification of the Intercontinental and U.S. titles gave him a lot of momentum.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL
Clay, NY

☎ SOMEBODY STOP STEPH!

I can't believe how stupid I am. I thought after Survivor Series that we wouldn't see Stephanie McMahon on TV for a long, long time. Then when she did come back, I thought she'd only be on occasionally. I should have known better. Since the big breakup of her and Triple-H, *Raw* has become *Raw Is Stephanie*. Will the McMahon family soap opera ever end?

JOHN ERVING
Princeton, NJ

HAILING HALL!

I really enjoyed watching the NWO's debut in the WWF at No Way Out, and I'm looking forward to watching these guys feud with "Stone-Cold," The Rock, Triple-H, and maybe even some of the mid-carders. But I think what I'm most excited about is Scott Hall's return. It's been so long since he's been a key player in the U.S. that I forgot how much fun it is to watch him. I've always liked watching his matches—ever since his days in the old AWA—but I also think he's the funniest guy in wrestling. The facial expressions he makes, the dopey jokes, and just the way he carries himself—it's all so damn hilarious. I hope he is able to put all his personal problems behind him so he can stick around the WWF for a while.

ANNE-MARIE CORCORAN
Wheat Ridge, CO

Edge as the number-one man in the 2002 "PWI 500"? That would be a surprise. But the former Intercontinental champ was reader William Clay's pick at the midway point of this year's "grading period."

GREAT COMEBACK! WHAT?!

I wonder how long Hulk Hogan was waiting for the first time he'd be greeted by shouts of "What?!" from WWF fans when he tried to cut a promo in the ring. It must have been a while, since as soon as the first "What?!" came, he countered it with "-tcha gonna do!" You know, as in "What-cha gonna do when 'Hulk-amania' runs wild on you!" It was the perfect counter, and it seemed to shut up some of the people in the crowd. Who said Hogan wasn't creative? I hope that was the beginning of the end of the popularity of that stupid Austin catchphrase.

JILL PORTER
Atwood, IN

Sean O'Haire was one of the first former WCW stars to invade the WWF, but he hasn't been heard from much since he was sent to OVW. Norm Claussen would like to see O'Haire (shown against R.C. Haas) back in the WWF soon.

RECOUNT! RECOUNT!

What's wrong with the people who read *PWI?* I don't mean every *PWI* reader, of course—just, oh, 24,678 of you! When I opened up my copy of the "Year In Review" issue (April 2002) and looked at the winners of your Achievement Awards, I couldn't believe The Rock was not voted Most Popular Wrestler of the Year. Rob Van Dam won it by more than 2,300 votes (24,678 to 22,309). Did you guys screw up the count or something?

I'm sure I'm one of the many WWF fans who thinks RVD was the best addition to the WWF in 2001, but this shows a lack of respect to The Rock. He's been the most entertaining WWF superstar of the last four years. No one electrifies an arena like the people's champion. He should have been a runaway winner for 2001, but because RVD was the hot new face, he got more votes. Everyone has the right to vote for whomever he or she wants, but I still think The Rock deserved better.

TIM THATCHER JR.
Fresno, CA

THRILL IS GONE

I was leafing through some of my old (actually only about a year old) magazines when it occurred to me that it wasn't long ago that Mark Jindrak and Sean O'Haire, two of The Natural Born Thrillers, were considered top-notch young prospects. The first time I saw them on *Nitro,* I thought they were fantastic. They were on WCW TV a lot toward the end and got a lot of ink in *PWI, Inside Wrestling,* and *The Wrestler.* Hell, they were both part of the WCW invasion of the WWF at the beginning.

I can understand the thinking behind sending them down to the "minor leagues" for some extra training, but they both should be ready by now. I really thought Sean O'Haire was an amazingly agile wrestler for a man his size, and I always liked his unusual look, too. I'm still hoping both Jindrak and O'Haire get another chance in the WWF, and I think O'Haire could be a big star as a singles wrestler.

NORM CLAUSSEN
Kimball, KS

FINALLY ... RESPECT

It took me a while to write, but I wanted to let you know how much I liked the cover of your March issue and the story about Chris Jericho that went with it ("No More Joking, No More Choking: Y2J Takes A Serious Stab At Superstardom!"). I doubted very seriously whether Jericho could be a main-event guy in the WWF from the day he debuted until the day he became the undisputed champion. But in the few months since he won the belt, Jericho has won me over. I enjoy the way he carries himself as champion, and I'm finally learning to appreciate his sense of humor.

The most important thing of all is that he has had some of his best matches since winning the title. Whether he remains a main-eventer in the WWF for much longer or not, I'll always respect him.

TOM GARBER
Trenton, NJ □

PWI Hotline Extra!

Your answers to our question of the week!

Question of the Week: What was your impression of the first live WWA pay-per-view, Revolution? (February 26 to March 4, 2002)

Hotline callers respond: "It looked to me like they rushed to put it together," responded Mike Therren of Tallahassee, Florida. "I thought the show had some good matches, but the production was lousy, and even the announcing was disappointing."

"I'd give it about a 'C+' overall if I had to grade it," said Alan Anderson of Woodville, Connecticut. "The Jeff Jarrett-Brian Christopher main event was good, but it was a letdown when they said Randy Savage wouldn't be there. He was the reason I ordered the show."

"I'll put it this way," responded Joe Sattley of Acme, Indiana. "Compared to the average WWF pay-per-view, it was lousy. Judging it on its own, it wasn't too bad, but there was lots of room for improvement."

BACK ISSUES OF INSIDE Wrestling

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April 1978: What Bob Backlund Can Learn From Bruno Sammartino. Also: Rick Steamboat, Bruiser, Superstar Graham, Ric Flair.

Dec. 1978: The Shattered Dreams Of Dusty Rhodes. Also: Mr. Wrestling II, Dino Bravo, Flair-Steamboat, Bruno Sammartino.

April 1979: The Terrible Pain Ric Flair Causes Dusty Rhodes. Also: Andre the Giant, Backlund-Malvia, Paul Jones, converted rulebreakers.

Aug. 1980: Larry Zbyszko's Foolproof Plot To Drive Bruno Out Of Wrestling. Also: Bobby Heenan, Mr. Wrestling II, Ox Baker.

Nov. 1980: Zbyszko vs. Putski: From Brotherly Love To Brutal Hatred. Also: Nick Bockwinkel, Dusty Rhodes, The Assassin, Koloff & Volkoff.

Jan. 1981: Race vs. Backlund: Did The WWF Trick Harley Race? Also: Pedro Morales, Snuka & Stevens, Strongbow-Sheik, Dick Slater.

April 1981: Bruno Sammartino Jr. Confesses: "It's Hell Carrying The Name Of My Father." Also: Bugsy McGraw, Capt. Lou Albano, Mongolian Stomper, Flair-Race.

May 1981: Hussein Arab vs. Ivan Koloff: A Bloody War Explodes In A Neutral Country. Also: Bob Backlund, Bobo Brazil, Santana & Bravo, D. Von Erich-Race.

Sept. 1981: Patera & The Freebirds: The Unholy Alliance Seeks To Cripple Ted DiBiase. Also: Junkyard Dog, Dory Funk Jr., Killer Khan, Ivan Koloff.

March 1982: Backlund-Valentine Death Match: The WWF Title Is Back Where It Belongs. Also: Austin Idol, Spoiler, Tommy Rich, Brisco-DiBiase.

April 1982: "Only Dusty Rhodes Can Save The AWA From Nick Bockwinkel," By Verne Gagne. Also: David Von Erich, Blackjacks, Masked Superstar & Super Destroyer, Andre-Khan.

May 1982: Adrian Adonis: "I Can Beat Bob Backlund ... I Just Can't Beat The System!" Also: Dusty Rhodes, Flair & Mr. Wrestling II, D. Von Erich-M. Graham, Hogan-Blackwell.

June 1982: Blackjack Mulligan Jr.'s Tragic Story: "I Have No Father ... I Have No Friends!" Also: Sgt. Slaughter, Morales-Valentine, Montreal, Super Destroyer & Masked Superstar.

Aug. 1982: Is Andre The Giant Getting Too Big For Wrestling? Also: Nick Bockwinkel, Mil Mascaras, Backlund-Mulligan Sr., Studd-Super Destroyer.

Oct. 1982: Roddy Piper: "I Don't Have To Cheat To Defeat Tommy Rich." Also: James J. Dillon, Andre-Mulligan Sr., Pat Patterson, Magnificent Muraco.

Nov. 1982: Ric Flair—Wrestling's Most Versatile Champion. Also: Hansen & Anderson, Mulligan-Windham, Jimmy Snuka.

Dec. 1982: Andre vs. Mulligan: The Giant Is Mightier Than The Claw. Also: Grand Wizard, Jerry Lawler, Rich-Heenan, Jack Brisco.

Feb. 1983: Rhodes vs. Funk: The Bloody Horror Of A Barbed Wire Fence Match. Also Ted DiBiase, Andre-Orton Jr., Hogan & Patera, Flair-Hansen.

March 1983: Superstar Graham: "The Hell With Pedro—I Want Backlund!" Also: Terry Funk, Rocky Johnson, JYD-Gino Hernandez, Johnn Studd.

April 1983: Ivan Koloff vs. Ken Patera: The Shocking Truth Behind The Battle Of The Titans. Also: Albano-Snuka, Kabuki, Tommy Rich.

June 1983: Bob Backlund vs. John Studd: The Untold Story Behind Studd's Raw Deal. Also: Jim Garvin, Bockwinkel-Lawler, Bob Orton Jr.

Sept. 1983: Zbyszko vs. Rich: Can The National Title Survive This Brutal Tug Of War? Also: Andre-Kamala, Piper-Valentine, Michael Hayes.

Nov. 1983: We Sent Hulk Hogan To Cover Bockwinkel vs. Wahoo ... And All Hell Broke Loose! Also: James J. Dillon, Race-Kevin Von Erich, Paul Ellering, Reed-JYD.

April 1984: Rick Steamboat Quits Wrestling! The *Real* Story Behind His Most Painful Decision. Also: Masked Superstar-Mulligan, Adams-Garvin, Barry Windham, Ric Flair.

June 1984: Ric Flair On The Defensive: Is Mike Rotundo Ready To Take The NWA Title? Also: Ted DiBiase, Jim Cornette, Angelo Mosca Jr.

July 1984: Ric Flair Brings The World Title To The New York Area: A Night Of Champions At The Meadowlands. Also: Martel-Bravo, Mr. Wrestling II, Jumbo Tsuruta.

Aug. 1984: Junkyard Dog Joins Jim Valiant's Boogie Woogie Brigade. Also: Steve O-Zbyszko, Magnum-Wrestling II, Austin Idol, Sugar-Spoiler.

Sept. 1984: Rick Martel Dethrones Jumbo Tsuruta: Finally, And AWA Champion To Be Proud Of. Also: Brody-LeDuc, Iron Sheik, Kerry Von Erich, Rock 'n' Roll Express.

Oct. 1984: Collision Of The Florida Musclemen: Can Billy Jack Squeeze Superstar Graham Out Of Wrestling? Also: Road Warriors, Flair-Steamboat, Eddie Gilbert, Orndorff & Shultz-Atlas & Johnson.

Nov. 1984: Dusty Rhodes: Champion Of Champions ... And Still The Lord Of The Ring. Also: Rich-Gilbert, Gino Hernandez, Road Warriors, JYD-Reed.

Dec. 1984: How Hulkamania Trampled Big John Studd. Also: Road Warriors, Magnum T.A., Wahoo McDaniel, Sullivan-Rhodes.

March 1985: He's Back And Better Than Ever: Backlund-A-Mania Is Sweeping The Nation! Also: Koloffs, Billy Jack, Von Erichs-Devastation Inc.

June 1985: Sgt. Slaughter Topples Ric Flair—So Why Isn't He Champion? Also: Ellering & Road Warriors, Koloffs & Khrushchev-Von Erichs, Kevin Von Erich, Andre & JYD.

Sept. 1985: A Psychologist Examines "Rowdy" Roddy Piper! Is He As Crazy As You Think He Is? Also: Magnum-Blanchard, Fantastics, Ric Flair, Gagne & Sammartino.

Jan. 1986: Rick Steamboat vs. Magnificent Muraco: The Volacano Rumbles. Also: Warriors & Ellering, Mike Von Erich, Jake Roberts, Koloff & Khrushchev-Rock 'n' Rolls.

March 1986: Barry Windham & Mike Rotundo: Will Their Reunion Spell Disaster For Kendall Windham? Also: Studd-Hillbilly, Rick Rude, Jerry Lawler, Russians-Road Warriors.

April 1986: Starrcade's Over, But The Feud Rages On: Dusty Rhodes And Ric Flair Cannot Survive '86! Also: Andre-Heenan, Bill Watts, Scott Hall, Lance Von Erich.

June 1986: Barry Windham's NWA Mission: Humiliate Ric Flair! Also: Nord-Road Warriors, British Bulldogs, Lance Von Erich-One Man Gang, Tully Blanchard.

July 1986: All-American Special Issue: Sgt. Slaughter, Hulk Hogan, Magnum T.A. Also: Ivan Koloff, Rude-Lance Von Erich.

Aug. 1986: WrestleMania 2: Hulk Hogan's Night Of Redemption. Also: Jim & Ron Garvin, Steve Williams, Rick Martel, Sir Oliver Humperdink.

Sept. 1986: Dusty Rhodes & Magnum T.A.: America's Team Is Not Out For Glory ... It's Out For Revenge! Also: Andre-Hogan, Chris Adams, Barry Windham, Scott Hall.

Oct. 1986: The NWA Championship Sinks To A New Low: Ric Flair Needs 10 Thugs To Defeat Lex Luger! Also: Road Warriors, Randy Savage, Verne Gagne, Fantastics-Sheepherders.

Nov. 1986: Paul Ellering's Own Story: "How My Road Warriors Made Dusty Rhodes NWA Champion." Also: Adams-Rude, British Bulldogs, Bockwinkel-Hansen, Bill Watts.

Dec. 1986: Rock 'n' Roll Revival: Morton And Gibson Regain The NWA World Tag Title! Also: Lex Luger, Hogan-Adonis, Hall-DeBeers, Baby Doll.

Jan. 1987: The New Roddy Piper: Why The Fans Love Him ... But Why They Should Hate Him! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Rude-Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow.

Feb. 1987: Hogan, Piper, Orndorff: The WWF's Hate Triangle. Also: Terry Taylor, Ric Flair, Midnight Rockers, Kevin Von Erich.

March 1987: Happy Anniversary, Hulk Hogan! The WWF Champion Celebrates Three Years At The Top. Also: Ric Flair, Missy-Gilbert, Lex Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.

April 1987: Steamboat & Windham: Manny Happy Returns! Also: Paul Ellering, Hacksaw Duggan, prospects.

May 1987: Barry Windham's Warning To Lex Luger: "Keep Away From The Four Horsemen." Also: Steamboat-Savage, Hogan-Andre, Freebirds & Sunshine, Williams-OMG, Midnight Rockers.

June 1987: Nikita Koloff's Mission: Saddle The Horsemen And Trample Lex Luger! Also: Roddy Piper, Adams & Taylor, Bruiser Brody, Scott Hall.

July 1987: Exclusive Ringside Reports: WrestleMania III Makes History! Also: Midnight Rockers, Mike Rotundo, Danny Davis, Ted DiBiase.

Aug. 1987: The Superpowers' Super Victory: Dusty Rhodes & Nikita Koloff Win The Crockett Cup. Also: Hulk Hogan, Lane & Cornette, Mike Von Erich, Adams & Taylor.

Sept. 1987: Hulk Hogan Defeats Harley Race: How Fate Took The Greatness Out Of This Violent Feud. Also: New Breed-R&R Express, Rich & Idol, Honky Tonk Man, Eddie Gilbert.

Oct. 1987: The Rock 'n' Roll Express Win Their Fourth NWA Title: Also: Hogan-Bigelow, Rhodes-Blanchard, scaffold, Kevin Sullivan.

Nov. 1987: Special Fan Poll: Should Mr. T Be Allowed To Referee? Also: War Games, Bulldogs, Condrey & Rose, Dusty Rhodes.

Dec. 1987: Rhodes Challenges Luger: Will Dusty's U.S. Title Hopes Split The Superpowers? Also: Hayes-Bubba, Magnum T.A., Randy Savage, Al Perez.

Jan. 1988: Is Hulk Hogan Bored With The WWF Title? Also: R&Rs-Horsemen, Flair-R. Garvin, Adrian Adonis, Steve Williams.

Feb. 1988: A Special Analysis By Jesse Ventura: Randy Savage Has Wimped Out! Also: Sting, R&Rs-Blanchard & Anderson, Kevin Von Erich, Dangerously-Lawler-Dundee.

March 1988: Bam Bam Bigelow: Wrestling's Most Dangerous Man. Also: Adams-Perez, Nikita Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.

May 1988: Million-Dollar Middleman: The Future Of The WWF Is In Ted DiBiase's Hands. Also: Zbyszko & Baby Doll, Road Warriors-Konga & Warlord, Fritz Von Erich, Rockers-Express.

June 1988: The Noble Savage: How Beauty Killed The Beast Within "The Macho Man." Also: Warriors-Warlord & Barbarian, R&R Express, Baby Doll, G. Gagne-Hennig.

Aug. 1988: What Randy Savage Must Do To Escape The Shadow Of Hulk Hogan. Also: Hyatt-Gilbert, Sting, Michael Hayes, Honky Tonk.

Oct. 1988: Preview & Analysis: Megapowers vs. Megabucks. Also: Horsemen, Jerry Lawler, Warlord & Barbarian, Dangerously-Gilbert, Beefcake-Honky Tonk.

Nov. 1988: Dusty Rhodes vs. Barry Windham: The Night The Teacher Learned A Lesson. Also: Kerry-Lawler, Lex Luger, Muraco-Valentine, Freebirds.

Dec. 1988: Exclusive "Hotseat" Interview: Roddy Piper—Will He Ever Be Back? Also: Powers of Pain, Ultimate Warrior, Ric Flair, Bambi-Mystic, Kevin Von Erich.

Feb. 1989: Tully & Arn Will Fall Under Bobby Heenan! A Special Analysis By J.J. Dillon. Also: Hogan-Bossman, Sgt. Slaughter, Lawler-*Inside Wrestling*, Davis-Wayne.

June 1989: Finally, Fortune Favors The Challenger: Rick Steamboat Wins Ric Flair's NWA Belt! Also: Morton & Gibson, Macho Madness-Hulkamania, Lex Luger, Jimmy Jack Funk.

July 1989: Megapowers II? It's Time For Ultimate Warrior And Sting To Reunite! Also: Kerry Von Erich, Savage & Hart, Barry Windham, Demolition-Powers of Pain, ex-NWA stars.

Aug. 1989: Your Ballots Are In: Hulkamania Rules! Also: Tanaka & Diamond, Rick Steamboat, Bigelow-Rhodes, Rick Rude, Jim Cornette.

Sept. 1989: Savage Is Shamed By Hogan—Only Elizabeth Can Save Him Now. Also: Lex Luger, Mil Mascaras, Dusty Rhodes, Bushwhackers, Skandor Akbar.

Oct. 1989: Dusty Rhodes' WWF Hit List. Also: Hall-Pillman-Vicious, Curt Hennig, Warriors, Terry Gordy, Kevin Von Erich.

Nov. 1989: Please, Elizabeth—Don't Wrestle Sherri! Also: Mil Mascaras, Dangerously-Cornette, Sting-T. Funk, Lex Luger, Jake Roberts.

Dec. 1989: The Dusty Road Is Paved With Gold: The American Dream Lives On! Also: Ric Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry-Chu-hi, Lex Luger, Larry Zbyszko.

Jan. 1990 Why Sting's Friendship Is Tearing Ric Flair Apart. Also: Morton & Gibson, Hulk Hogan, Sting-Flair, Roberts-DiBiase, Lawler-Embry.

Feb. 1990: Sex Symbol Showdown: Rude's Out ... Piper's In ... And The Fans Love It! Also: Warriors-Skyscrapers, Jimmy Snuka, Tom Zenk, Destruction Crew, Kerry Von Erich.

March 1990 (Special Issue): The '80s: A Rousing Review Of A Dynamic Decade. Also: Bobby Heenan, Ric Flair, Paul Orndorff.

April 1990: Starrcade '89: Night Of The Iron Men. Also: Warrior-Hogan, Dustin Rhodes, Buzz Sawyer, WWF shuffle.

May 1990: WrestleMania VI Main Event: Hulk Hogan vs. Ultimate Warrior: Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: Jerry Lawler, Al Perez, Lex Luger, Woman, LPWA.

June 1990: Tragedy Strikes Sting! How You Can Help Speed His Recovery. Also: Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate Warrior, Jeff Jarrett.

July 1990: Our Urgent Plea To Hulk Hogan & Ultimate Warrior: Team Up And Eliminate These Men. Also: Steiners, Sting, Earthquake, Kokina Maximus, Tessa.

Aug. 1990: The Experts Agree: Lex Luger Has Made Ric Flair A Broken Man: Also: Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior, Pillman & Zenk, Terry Taylor, Jerry Lawler.

Sept. 1990: Fighting Fire With Fire: The Awesome Foursome—Committed To Destroying The Horsemen. Also: Hulk Hogan, Hacksaw Duggan, JYD, Adams-Jeannie, Midnight Express.

Oct. 1990: Sting: "I Feel Like I've Conquered The World!" Also: Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, El Gigante, Mike Rotundo, Juice Patrol.

Nov. 1990: Ric Flair & Hulk Hogan: A Tale Of Two Ex-Champions. Also: Sid Vicious, Sgt. Slaughter, Jeannie-Toni, Mr. Fuji & Orient Express.

Dec. 1990: Halloween Havoc Horror! Why Sting Is Spooked By Sid Vicious. Also: Hulk Hogan, Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Larry Zbyszko.

Jan. 1991: Warning To The Ultimate Warrior: The Legion Of Doom Will Lead You Tom Desruction. Also: Paul E. Dangerously, Chris Adams, Steiners, Lawler-T. Funk.

Feb. 1991: Our Plan For The "Hulkster" To Regain The WWF World Belt. Also: Terry Taylor, Rick Martel, Sting & Simmons, all-annoying, Stan Hansen.

March 1991: The Earthquake Feud Rumbles On: Will Hulk Hogan Be The Victim Of His Own Deadly Obsession? Also: Roberts-Martel, Sting-Hansen, Keirn-Perez, Barry Windham.

April 1991: The Steiners: They's Be Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team, But ... Also: Eddie Gilbert, Flair-Sting, Steiners, Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Sgt. Slaughter.

May 1991: Savage vs. Warrior: The Bloodlust Of Ex-Champions. Also: Steiners, Sting, Virgil, D. Sammartino-I. Koloff.

June 1991: Steiners, LOD: Tag Team Thunder. Also: Steve Williams, Nikita Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees, Arn Anderson.

July 1991: Hogan's Burning Mad! Beating Slaughter For The Title Was Not Enough. Also: Virgil, Nastys, Steiners, Dan Spivey, Terry Funk.

Aug. 1991: Are The Steiners Getting Too Cocky For Their Own Good? Also: Jerry Lawler, Rick Steamboat, Warrior-Undertaker, Dustin Rhodes, Flair-Windham.

Sept. 1991: Justice Is In The WWF ... And Hogan's In The Biggest Trouble Of His Life! Also: Missy-Paul E., Rick Rude, Curt Hennig, Stevie Ray, Diamond Exchange.

Oct. 1991: Exclusive Preview & Analysis: SummerSlam '91. Also: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Leg Luger, Santana-Atlas, Steve Williams, Studd-Zenk.

Nov. 1991: Our Investigation Reveals ... The Truth Behind The Hogan-Savage Connection. Also: Lex Luger, Ric Flair, War Games, Mounties, foreign objects.

Dec. 1991: A Night To Remember: SummerSlam Provides Heat For The Cold Months Ahead. Also: Alexandra York, Simmons-Luger, Lane & Cornette, Leatherface.

Jan. 1992: *Inside Wrestling* Reveals: Sting's Memo From A Maniac! Also: Freebirds, Blackhearts, Bret Hart, Dusty Rhodes, Mike Rotundo.

Feb. 1992: A Reign Of Pain: Lex Luger—The Agony Of A World Champion. Also: Bret Hart, Patriot, Rick Rude, Enforcers, Thesz & Rogers.

March 1992: Who's Winning The Hogan-Flair Wars? Also: Steiners, Survivor Series, Enforcers-Rhodes & Steamboat, Johnny B. Badd.
May 1992: War! WrestleMania Will Be Sid And Hulk's Battleground. Also: Jushin Liger, Eddie Gilbert, Repo Man, Austin-Blossom, Tri-State & UWF.
June 1992: Sting: A New Champion, A New Era. Also: Hulk Hogan, Harley Race, Marcus Bagwell, Tony Atlas, IRS & DiBiase.
July 1992: Is Regaining The WWF Title An Impossible Undertaking? Also: Sherri & Shawn, Big Van Vader, Gordy & Williams, Kamala, Joe Savoldi.
Aug. 1992: The Closer Flair Gets ... The More Savage "Macho Man" Becomes. Also: Jack-Badd, Brian Christopher, LOD & Ellering, Taylor & Valentine, Dusty Wolfe.
Sept. 1992: Hulk Hogan's "Retirement": Why The WWF Will Never Let Him Rest In Peace. Also: War Games, Big Van Vader, Kamala, Marty Jannetty, U.K.
Oct. 1992: SummerSlam '92: Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: S. Steiner-Muta, Ron Simmons, Eddie Gilbert, Eric Embry.
Nov. 1992: The Great American Crash: Vader Crushes Sting For The WCW World Title. Also: Ric Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Madusa, Warlord & Barbarian-Bushwhackers, top rope rule.
Dec. 1992: Hey, Ric Flair: Stop Whining And Start Winning. Also: Razor Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jeff Jarrett, Windham & D. Rhodes, NWA title.
Jan. 1993 (Special Edition): 80,355 Fans Can't Be Wrong: This Was The Greatest SummerSlam Ever! Also: WWF-USWA, LOD, Sting-Simmons, Bret-Shango, Rude-Dustin.
March 1993: Who Controls The Balance Of Power In The WWF? Also: Shawn Michaels, Nikita Koloff, Windham-Dustin, Survivor Series, Rod Price.
April 1993: New Blood! The Wrestlers Who Could Revitalize The WWF In '93. Also: Z-Man & Gunn, Sting-Vader, Dangerous Alliance, Ric Flair.
May 1993: Exclusive WrestleMania IX Match Analysys. Also: Andre the Giant, Pillman & Austin, Great Muta, Headshrinkers-Steiners, 2 Cold Scorpio.
Feb. 1994: Our Holiday Wish List For 1994. Also: Hogan-Savage-Bret, Hacksaw Duggan, Doinks, Hollywood Blonds, Steven Regal.
April 1994 (Special Issue): The *Inside Wrestling* Computer Tournament. Also: Lex Luger, Starrcade, Yoko-Fuji, Ric Flair, Curt Hennig, Funk-Sabu.
May 1994: Lex Luger & Bret Hart: Their Greatest Triumphs, Their Gravest Tragedies. Also: Flair-Rude, Rick Morton, Heenan-Bockwinkel, Brian Christopher, Yoko-Booger.
June 1994: Wake Up, Rick Steamboat: Ric Flair Is Still "Slick" Ric! Also: Jimmy Snuka, Tony Anthony, IRS, Bruise Brothers, Alundra Blayze, Freebirds.
July 1994 (Special Issue): A Look Into Wrestling's Future: You Won't Believe What You'll See! Also: Ron Simmons, Sting, Earthquake-Booger, Bob Armstrong, Diesel.
Oct. 1994 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Doink, Vader-Race, Mabel, Dory Funk Jr., Owen-Bret, Hall of Fame.
March 1995: Predictions 1995. Also: Nastys, Razor Ramon, Tasmaniac, Kid-Man O'-War, Pillman & Hogan.
June 1995: The Beginning Of The End? Will Hulk Hogan Get Burned By Friendly Fire? Also: Steve Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy, Bret-Owen, Jeff Jarrett.
Aug. 1995: The Untold Truth: WrestleMania X—The Winners And Losers: Also: Johnny B. Badd, Bam Bam Bigelow, John Studd, Bubba-Sting.
Oct. 1995 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Randy Savage, Bret & Cactus, Sting, Diesel, Hawk.
Nov. 1995: One Defense In Four Months?! Strip Hulk Hogan Of The Title—Now! Also: Alex Wright, Tatanka, King of Ring, Chris Benoit, Backlund-Clinton.
Dec. 1995: White With Fright, Green With Envy: Why The Undertaker Had To Bury Kama. Also: Vader-Hogan, Warrior-Renegade, Gangstas-PE, Waylon Mercy, Heavenly Bodies.
Jan. 1996: Our Holiday Wish List For 1996! Also: Scott Norton, Sid Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio, Barry Horowitz, Sabu.
Feb. 1996: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1996 Has In Store For Them! Also: Goldust, Sherri-Parker, Mikey Whipwreck, Smokin' Gunns.
March 1996: His Excellency! How Bret Masterminded Diesel's Execution. Also: Jeff Jarrett, Giant, Jim Cornette, Survivor Series, Eddie Guerrero.
June 1996: Luger Or Hogan? If Sting Makes The Wrong Choice, He's Through!. Also: Road Warriors, Roddy Piper, Ahmed Johnson, Raven, Al Snow
Aug. 1996: The Greening Of Wrestling: How Sting & Shawn Will Become $50,000,000 Men! Also: Bodydonnas, Giant, Guerrera-Misterio, George Steele, Goldust & Marlena.
Oct. 1996 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Jake Roberts, Yokozuna, Giant-Konnan, Ahmed Johnson, Chris Jericho, strutters.
Nov. 1996: The Steiners: Feasting On A Buffet Of Violence. Also: Shawn Michaels, Sabu-Douglas, King of Ring, Eddie Guerrero, truck stop terror.
Dec. 1996: Three Women For Four Horsemen? The Hot Search For A Fourth Filly Has Begun! Also: Sunny & Gunns, Giant, Goldust, Cornette & Hart, Jerry Jarrett.
Holiday 1996 (Special Issue): The Tombstone: Wresling's Deadliest Finisher. Also: 1997 calendar, "Pyscho" Sid, Benoit-Misterio, Steiners-NWO, Pit Bull I, Jushin Liger.
Feb. 1997: Trouble In Egoville: Is There An NWO Within The NWO? Also: Chris Candido, Bret-Shawn, Ric Flair, Joey Styles, Liger-Benoit.
June 1997: Ahmed Johnson Reveals: "I Almost Joined The Nation Of Domination." Also: Mankind, Lex Luger, NWO, Davey Boy Smith, Jerry Graham.
Oct. 1997 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: LOD-PG-13, Rob Van Dam, Flair & Horsemen, Ken Shamrock, McMichael-White, Madd & Mama Maxxine.
Nov. 1997: WWF War Zone: Interfederation Battles Rock The Sport! Also: Ahmed Johnson, Curt Hennig, *Nueva* World Order, Chris Candido, Dan Severn.
Dec. 1997: Losing Is Bull! Has Dennis Rodman Had It With Hulk Hogan? Also: Steve Austin, Jarrett & Debra, Harts, Funk-Francine, Chris Jericho.
Holiday 1997 (Special Issue): The Steiners' Million-Dollar Gamble! Also: 1998 calendar, Alex Wright, The Patriot, Sgt. Slaughter, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards.
March 1998: Hart Transplant! The Truth Behind Bret's Defection To WCW. Also: Steve McMichael, Bam Bam Bigelow, Steve Austin, Disco Inferno.
April 1998 (Special Issue): The 1998 *Inside Wrestling* Computer Tournament. Also: Scott Hall, Marlena, Chris Benoit, Gunn & James, Sabu-Sandman.
May 1998: Is The WWF Screwing Another Hart? Also: Steve Austin, Dallas Page, Booker T, Larry Zbyszko, Al Snow.
June 1998: Exclusive! Steve Austin: The 10 Men Who Inspired His Toughness. Also: Dusty & Dustin, Perry Saturn, Mortis, Jeff Jarrett.
July 1998 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Jericho-Misterio Jr., Steve Austin, Sunny, Scott Steiner, Christopher-Michinoku.
Aug. 1998: WrestleMania XIV: The *Real* Winners And Losers. Also: Sunny, Curt Hennig, Dan Severn, Ultimo Dragon.
Sept. 1998: Power Surge! While The NWO Fiddles ... These Men Are Burning. Also: Sable, Ultimo-Guerrero, DeGeneration X-Owen, Rocky Maivia, Mad Russian-Rambo.
Oct. 1998 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Steve Austin, Taka Michinoku, Al Snow, Hollywood Hogan, Roddy Piper, Misawa-Kiwada.
Nov. 1998: Austin vs. Goldberg: Who Would Win And Why. Also: Bret Hart, Dude Love, Junkyard Dog, Helmsley-Michaels, Ray-Booker.
Dec. 1998: DDP's Big Bang Theories: Cutting Loose On Life, Love, & The Ultimate Buzz. Also: Sable-Jackie, Mankind, Hogan-Horace, D-Lo, APW.
Holiday 1998 (Special Issue): Kane: Still Haunted By His Day Of Glory. Also: Eddie Guerrero, Stevie Ray, Val Venis, turnbuckle turkeys, bonus calendar.
Jan. 1999: Seasons Greetings With A Bang (DDP & Kimberly). Also: Severn-Shamrock, Konnan, Arn, Undertaker-Kane, Chris Jericho.
Feb. 1999: Wrestling's Top Stars: What's Ahead For '99! Also: Hogan & Hart, D-Lo, Ken Shamrock, Slaughter-Snow.
March 1999: Estrange Situation! Insider Reveals: "Shane Still Resents His Father! Also: X-Pac, Hogan-Warrior, Jesse Ventura, Billy Kidman, Scott Norton.
April 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 *Inside Wrestling* Computer Tournament. Also: Bossman-McMahon, Steiner & Bischoff, Hollywood Hogan, Wrath, Blue Meanie.
May 1999: Team Corporate's WrestleMania Scare! Mankind's Title Victory Could Have Spoiled Everything! Also: New Age Outlaws, Eddie Guerrero, Triple-H, Bill Goldberg.
June 1999: Still In-Vince-Ible! What Will It Take To Topple This Man? Also: Rey Misterio Jr., ECW, Triple-H, NWO, Blue Meanie.
July 1999 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Vince McMahon, Vincent, Eric Bischoff, Giant Baba.
Aug. 1999: WrestleMania XV: The *Real* Winners And Losers! Also: Vam Dam-Lynn, Saturn, Goldust, Steiner-Bagwell.
Sept. 1999: Shane, Come Back! Can Vince Survive Without His Son? Also: Bret Hart, Rick Rude, Ken Shamrock, Hogan-Flair-Page-Goldberg, Tajiri-Crazy.
Oct. 1999 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Mankind & Shamrock, Snow-Holly, Sting, Edge, Flair-Robinson, AIWF.
Nov. 1999: Crash At The Bash! Enter Sid, Viciously! Also: Undertaker-Austin, Acolytes, Master P, Debra, Justin Credible.
Dec. 1999: The Rock: What Makes You Love/Hate This Man? Also: Sting, Shane Douglas, Droz, Piper-Bagwell, Taz.
Holiday 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 Turnbuckle Turkey Awards. Also: Sting, Dogg-Gunn, Undertaker, Steve Corino, 2000 calendar.
Jan. 2000: Dreaming Of An Extreme Christmas (Tommy Dreamer & Francine). Also: Goldberg, Al Snow, Billy Gunn, Doring & Road Kill, cigar-chompers.
Feb. 2000: Wrestling's Top Stars: What's Ahead For 2000! Vince-Bulldog, Mike Awesome, Sid Vicious, Gorilla Monsoon.
March 2000: Kevin Nash & Scott Hall: Getting Inside The Outsiders' Heads. Also: Dudleys, Jerry Lynn, Vince-DX, Kimberly, Zero Gravity.
April 2000 (Special Issue): The Y2K Computer Tournament. Also: Jarrett-PTB, Christopher & Taylor, Lou E. Dangerously, Lawler-Fantastico.
May 2000: Hey, Scott, Watch Your Back! The NWO Is Setting You Up! Also: Hacksaw Duggan, Rikishi Phatu, Test, Mike Awesome.
June 2000: Chris Jericho's Deadliest Enemy: His Ego! Also: Tazz, Kidman-Torrie, Nash-Funk, Buff Bagwell, New Jack.
July 2000 (Special Issue): It's True! Kurt Angle Will Be Hotter Than The Rock In Six Months! Also: Elizabeth, Steve Blackman, Norman Smiley, Spike Dudley, personal questions.
Aug. 2000: WrestleMania 2000: The *Real* Winners & Losers! Also: Dustin-Funk, Eddie Guerrero, ECW extreme?, WCW analysis.
Sept. 2000: Those Damn Dudleys! Is There An Evil Act Fans Won't Cheer? Also: Billy Kidman, Taka Michinoku, Yoshihiro Tajiri, Jeff Jarrett.
Oct. 2000 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Kurt Angle, Malenko-Saturn, Lance Storm, Tori, Jumbo Tsuruta, ECW headliners.
Nov. 2000: When Will Triple-H Proclaim ... "I'm Sick Of Being A McMahon!" Also: Trish Stratus, Shane Douglas, Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, Yoshihiro Tajiri.
(FULL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH JANUARY 2001)
Jan. 2001: Olympic Games: What Kind Of Angle Has Curt Been Running? Also: Tazz-Lawler, Big Vito, Stacy Keibler, Chris Benoit, Kid Kash, Chyna.
March 2001: Who Knows The Rock's Role? Is He Ditching Wrestling For Hollywood? Also: Trish, Billy Gunn, Jarrett-Sting, C.W. Anderson, Booker T.
May 2001: The WrestleMania Tip Sheet: What You Must Know About The Event Of The Year! Also: Scott Steiner, Dudleys, Malenko & Lita, Shane Douglas, Raven.
Aug. 2001: Game Face! We Haven't Seen Hunter's Ugly Side ... But Just Wait! Also: WWF vs. WCW, Kurt Angle, Vince McMahon, Booker T, Hardys & Lita, Haas brothers, WCW babes.
Oct. 2001: Will Debra Ice Stone-Cold? Also: Vince vs. Shane, Chyna, William Regal, former Big Three stars.
Dec. 2001: The WWF-WCW Dream Matches We Really Want! Also: Tazz, Dudleys, Perry Saturn, Johnny Valentine, 100 WCW facts.

☐ MAR 78	☐ DEC 84	☐ AUG 88	☐ AUG 91	☐ DEC 95	☐ MAY 99
☐ APR 78	☐ MAR 85	☐ OCT 88	☐ SEP 91	☐ JAN 96	☐ JUN 99
☐ DEC 78	☐ JUN 85	☐ NOV 88	☐ OCT 91	☐ FEB 96	☐ JUL 99
☐ APR 79	☐ SEP 85	☐ DEC 88	☐ NOV 91	☐ MAR 96	☐ AUG 99
☐ NOV 80	☐ JAN 86	☐ FEB 89	☐ DEC 91	☐ JUN 96	☐ SEP 99
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☐ DEC 82	☐ APR 87	☐ JUN 90	☐ MAR 93	☐ APR 98	☐ SEP 00
☐ FEB 83	☐ MAY 87	☐ JUL 90	☐ APR 93	☐ MAY 98	☐ OCT 00
☐ MAR 83	☐ JUN 87	☐ AUG 90	☐ MAY 93	☐ JUN 98	☐ NOV 00
☐ APR 83	☐ JUL 87	☐ SEP 90	☐ FEB 94	☐ JUL 98	☐ JAN 01
☐ JUN 83	☐ AUG 87	☐ OCT 90	☐ APR 94	☐ AUG 98	☐ MAR 01
☐ SEP 83	☐ SEP 87	☐ NOV 90	☐ MAY 94	☐ SEP 98	☐ MAY 01
☐ NOV 83	☐ OCT 87	☐ DEC 90	☐ JUN 94	☐ OCT 98	☐ AUG 01
☐ APR 84	☐ NOV 87	☐ JAN 91	☐ JUL 94	☐ NOV 98	☐ OCT 01
☐ JUN 84	☐ DEC 87	☐ FEB 91	☐ OCT 94	☐ DEC 98	☐ DEC 01
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☐ AUG 84	☐ FEB 88	☐ APR 91	☐ JUN 95	☐ JAN 99	
☐ SEP 84	☐ MAR 88	☐ MAY 91	☐ AUG 95	☐ FEB 99	
☐ OCT 84	☐ MAY 88	☐ JUN 91	☐ OCT 95	☐ MAR 99	
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PWI official ratings

For period ended March 15, 2002

TOP 10

1. **CHRIS JERICHO**
   225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
   (1) WWF World champion
2. **TOSHIAKI KAWADA**
   245, Ashikaga, Japan
   (–) All-Japan Triple Crown champion
3. **TRIPLE-H**
   253, Greenwich, CT
   (4) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
4. **STEVE AUSTIN**
   252, Victoria, TX
   (3) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
5. **JUN AKIYAMA**
   225, Hiroshima, Japan
   (6) GHC heavyweight champion
6. **WILLIAM REGAL**
   257, Blackpool, England
   (5) WWF Intercontinental champion
7. **ROB VAN DAM**
   237, Battle Creek, MI
   (–) No. 4 contender: WWF World title
8. **TADAO YASUDA**
   310, Tokyo, Japan
   (–) IWGP heavyweight champion
9. **PROTOTYPE**
   260, Los Angeles, CA
   (–) OVW heavyweight champion
10. **KURT ANGLE**
    233, Pittsburgh, PA
    (–) No. 5 contender: WWF World title

Steve Austin

TAG TEAMS

1. **BILLY GUNN & CHUCK PALUMBO**
   Combined weight: 524 pounds
   (7) WWF World tag team champions
2. **TAIYO KEA & KEIJI MUTO**
   Combined weight: 480 pounds
   (2) All-Japan International tag team champions
3. **BRADSHAW & FAAROOQ**
   Combined weight: 599 pounds
   (–) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
4. **BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY**
   Combined weight: 585 pounds
   (5) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
5. **TAKAO OMORI & YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA**
   Combined weight: 491 pounds
   (4) GHC tag team champions
6. **JEFF & MATT HARDY**
   Combined weight: 422 pounds
   (–) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
7. **GEDO & JADO**
   Combined weight: 415 pounds
   (–) IWGP junior tag team champions
8. **BOOKER T & TEST**
   Combined weight: 532 pounds
   (3) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title
9. **DOUG BASHAM & DAMAJA**
   Combined weight: 481 pounds
   (10) OVW Southern tag team champions
10. **ALBERT & SCOTTY TOO HOTTY**
    Combined weight: 556 pounds
    (8) No. 5 contenders: WWF World tag title

WWF

World Champion:
CHRIS JERICHO
(C) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba

1—**WILLIAM REGAL** *(1) 257, Blackpool, England*
2—**TRIPLE-H** *(3) 253, Greenwich, CT*
3—**STEVE AUSTIN** *(2) 252, Victoria, TX*
4—**ROB VAN DAM** *(7) 237, Battle Creek, MI*
5—**KURT ANGLE** *(5) 233, Pittsburgh, PA*
6—**THE ROCK** *(4) 272, Miami, FL*
7—**THE UNDERTAKER** *(9) 304, Dallas, TX*
8—**KANE** *(8) 345, parts unknown*
9—**DALLAS PAGE** *(10) 260, Point Pleasant, NJ*
10—**BOOKER T** *(–) 250, Houston, TX*

OVW

OVW Champion:
PROTOTYPE
(1) 260, Los Angeles, CA

1—**LEVIATHAN** *(C) 325, parts unknown*
2—**BULL BUCHANAN** *(3) 325, Marietta, GA*
3—**MARK JINDRAK** *(–) 253, Auburn, NY*
4—**FLASH** *(2) 225, Detroit, MI*
5—**DAVID FLAIR** *(–) 205, Charlotte, NC*
6—**DOUG BASHAM** *(4) 241, Louisville, KY*
7—**RANDY ORTON** *(–) 265, St. Louis, MO*
8—**NICK DINSMORE** *(5) 226, Jefferson, IN*
9—**SEAN O'HAIRE** *(10) 270, Hilton Head, SC*
10—**SHELTON BENJAMIN** *(8) 245, Minneapolis, MN*

NWA

NWA Champion:
DAN SEVERN
(–) 262, Coldwater, MI

1—**QUINN MAGNUM** *(1) 265, Pittsburgh, PA*
2—**HOTSTUFF HERNANDEZ** *(3) 280, Houston, TX*
3—**SPYDER** *(2) 225, New York, NY*
4—**SHINYA HASHIMOTO** *(C) 287, Gifu, Japan*
5—**A.J. STYLES** *(4) 202, Gainesville, GA*
6—**GARY STEELE** *(5) 241, London, England*
7—**MAGNUM** *(7) 227, Wellston, OH*
8—**BIG DON BRODIE** *(10) 350, Jackson, MS*
9—**TOM BRANDI** *(8) 248, Norristown, PA*
10—**JACEY NORTH** *(–) 189, New Orleans, LA*

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
TADAO YASUDA
(3) 310, Tokyo, Japan

1—**YUJI NAGATA** *(1) 228, Tokyo, Japan*
2—**KENSUKE SASAKI** *(2) 251, Tokyo, Japan*
3—**MINORU TANAKA** *(10) 219, Tokyo, Japan*
4—**RIKI CHOSHU** *(8) 246, Yamaguchi, Japan*
5—**MASA CHONO** *(4) 235, Tokyo, Japan*
6—**JUSHIN LIGER** *(6) 222, Hiroshima, Japan*
7—**HIROYOSHI TENZAN** *(7) 270, Tokyo, Japan*
8—**SCOTT NORTON** *(–) 360, Minneapolis, MN*
9—**MANABU NAKANISHI** *(–) 235, Tokyo, Japan*
10—**OSAMU NISHIMURA** *(–) 221, Tokyo, Japan*

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

APOCALYPSE WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Title Vacant; **1**—James Champagne; **2**—Slade; **3**—Joey Knight; **4**—Billy Flynn; **5**—Vladimir Urkov; **6**—Jaguar Vijay Singh; **7**—Danny Dynamic; **8**—Squeegee Kid; **9**—P.P. Smalls; **10**—Masamune.

BORDER CITY WRESTLING: Champion—Johnny Swinger; **1**—Nova; **2**—Simon Diamond; **3**—Scott D'Amore; **4**—El Tornado; **5**—Otis Apollo; **6**—Tyson Dux; **7**—Gutter; **8**—Chris Sabin; **9**—Ruffy Silverstein; **10**—Yukon Braxton.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Scoot Andrews; **1**—Mozart Fontaine; **2**—Billy Fives; **3**—Cheetah Master; **4**—Prince Nana; **5**—American Dragon; **6**—Low-Ki; **7**—Christopher Daniels; **8**—Slyk Wagner Brown; **9**—Xavier; **10**—Inferno.

INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Roman; **1**—Hadrian; **2**—Kevin Knight; **3**—Biggie Biggs; **4**—Damian Adams; **5**—Rob Eckos; **6**—Josh Daniels; **7**—The Patriot; **8**—Erik Andretti; **9**—Rapid Fire Maldonado; **10**—Steve Corino.

INDEPENDENT WRESTLING REVOLUTION: Champion—Yukon Braxton; **1**—Tommy Starr; **2**—Mark Gjoka; **3**—Brimstone; **4**—Rip Malibu; **5**—Tommy Johnson; **6**—Elvis Elliot; **7**—Madman Pondo; **8**—Breyer Wellington; **9**—Amazing N8; **10**—Anthony Rivera.

NATIONAL WRESTLING LEAGUE: Champion—Spazman Anthony; **1**—John Rambo; **2**—King Kong Bundy; **3**—Buff Bagwell; **4**—Aidiean; **5**—Flex Fenom; **6**—Latin Tornado; **7**—Gangrel; **8**—Gillberg; **9**—The Freak; **10**—Jake Davis.

NWA SOUTHWEST: Champion—Title Vacant; **1**—Chaz Taylor; **2**—J.P. Black; **3**—Chris Young; **4**—Kevin Northcutt; **5**—Al Jackson; **6**—The Devastator; **7**—Rudy Boy Gonzalez; **8**—Ikaika Loa; **9**—Mason Grace; **10**—Kyzer Douglas.

RING OF HONOR: Champion—Title Vacant; **1**—Low-Ki; **2**—American Dragon; **3**—Spanky; **4**—Christopher Daniels; **5**—Super Crazy; **6**—Xavier; **7**—Eddie Guerrero; **8**—Red; **9**—Quiet Storm; **10**—Jay Briscoe.

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Otto Schwanz; **1**—C.W. Anderson; **2**—Lazz; **3**—Kross; **4**—Malaki; **5**—Dewey Cheatum; **6**—Lodi; **7**—Ali Steele; **8**—Q-Sic; **9**—Natrone Steele; **10**—Scab.

WORLD LEAGUE WRESTLING: Champion—The Drill Instructor; **1**—Ron Harris; **2**—Bull Schmitt; **3**—Butch Reed; **4**—Wade Chism; **5**—Derek McQuinn; **6**—Superstar Steve; **7**—Matt Murphy; **8**—Trevor Rhodes; **9**—Brandon Walker; **10**—Marc Godeker.

WORLD WRESTLING ALL-STARS: Champion—Jeff Jarrett; **1**—Brian Christopher; **2**—Eddie Guerrero; **3**—Devon Storm; **4**—Juventud Guerrera; **5**—Sabu; **6**—Nova; **7**—Alan Funk; **8**—Psicosis; **9**—A.J. Styles; **10**—Reno.

XTREME WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Title Vacant; **1**—Buff Bagwell; **2**—Vampiro; **3**—Kid Kash; **4**—Johnny B. Badd; **5**—Josh Matthews; **6**—Konnan; **7**—Hail; **8**—The Wall; **9**—Greg Valentine; **10**—British Storm.

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(1) 245, Ashikaga, Japan

1—GENICHIRO TENRYU
(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan
2—KEIJI MUTO
(C) 245, Yamanashi, Japan
3—TAIYO KEA
(3) 235, Honolulu, HI
4—KENDO KA SHIN
(–) 195, Tokyo, Japan
5—SATOSHI KOJIMA
(5) 223, Tokyo, Japan
6—STEVE WILLIAMS
(6) 265, Norman, OK
7—MITSUYA NAGAI
(10) 238, Hokkaido, Japan
8—NOBUTAKA ARAYA
(8) 244, Chigasaki, Japan
9—MIKE BARTON
(4) 263, Austin, TX
10—GEORGE HINES
(–) 278, Houston, TX

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GHC Champion:
JUN AKIYAMA
(C) 225, Hiroshima, Japan

1—MITSUHARU MISAWA
(1) 228, Ashikaga, Japan
2—VADER
(5) 450, Denver, CO
3—YOSHINARI OGAWA
(6) 202, Fichigi, Japan
4—TAKAO OMORI
(3) 221, Tokyo, Japan
5—YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA
(4) 270, Sapporo, Japan
6—TAKUMA SANO
(7) 220, Tomakomai, Japan
7—AKIRA TAUE
(–) 265, Chichibu, Japan
8—2 COLD SCORPIO
(9) 222, Denver, CO
9—TAKESHI RIKIOH
(10) 286, Sakurai, Japan
10—TAKESHI MORISHIMA
(–) 281, Tokyo, Japan

EMLL

EMLL Champion:
UNIVERSO DOS MIL
(C) 240, Mexico City, Mexico

1—RAYO DE JALISCO JR.
(9) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico
2—SHOCKER
(3) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico
3—DR. WAGNER JR.
(8) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
4—TARZAN BOY
(–) 218, Mexico City, Mexico
5—MR. NIEBLA
(–) 185, Cualtitlan, Mexico
6—FUERZA GUERRERA
(5) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
7—ULTIMO GUERRERO
(–) 173, Mexico City, Mexico
8—ATLANTIS
(4) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
9—EMILIO CHARLES JR.
(10) 222, Mexico City, Mexico
10—CIEN CARAS
(–) 240, Lagos de Moreno, Mexico

AAA

AAA Champion:
LATIN LOVER
(C) 190, Monterrey, Mexico

1—HEAVY METAL
(3) 180, Mexico City, Mexico
2—HECTOR GARZA
(2) 220, Monterrey, Mexico
3—PERRO AGUAYO JR.
(1) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico
4—MASCARA SAGRADA
(4) 249, Veracruz, Mexico
5—ABISMO NEGRO
(7) 210, Pachua, Mexico
6—OCTAGON
(6) 180, Monterrey, Mexico
7—CIBERNETICO
(9) 235, Mexico City, Mexico
8—PIRATA MORGAN
(5) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
9—EL CANEK
(8) 235, Mexico City, Mexico
10—JERRY ESTRADA
(–) 239, Montclova, Mexico

ratings analysis

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 22 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important–and respected–ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Who said he wasn't a success? Okay, maybe the headline for the story on page 36 was a little harsh. **Dan Severn** did have a pretty successful wrestling career. Sure, he was lacking in charisma and didn't have the gift of gab that is such a necessary ingredient for success in this business these days, but he did hold the NWA heavyweight title for more than four years in 1995 to 1999.

Dan Severn

Granted, that wasn't exactly the heyday of the NWA, but, hey, a four-year championship reign is still a four-year championship reign.

And we shouldn't even say "did have" right now. He's *still* having a successful wrestling career. Just when you thought it was okay to totally forget about "The Beast," he resurfaces.

The date was March 9. The place was Tokyo, Japan, at Korakuen Hall. Severn ended the four-month title reign of **Shinya Hashimoto** and once again became NWA heavyweight champion under some very bizarre circumstances. New NWA President **Jim Miller** came down to ringside during the match, but he wasn't there simply to observe. He consulted with NWA referee **Fred Richards**, and after he did that, Richards seemed to favor Severn. Richards *definitely* favored Severn when he got Hashimoto's shoulders down on the mat using a bridge suplex a few moments later. Richards made an extremely fast three-count, and although Severn wasn't happy about the tainted manner by which he won, he was awarded the belt and declared the new champion.

Did Severn hear about the headline on the **Ron Waterman** story and get motivated to make his big comeback? We doubt that, but the timing was rather unusual. Unfortunately for Severn, the NWA title win did not earn him a spot in our Top 10. Not even close, actually. It will be interesting to see what kind of impact Severn will be able to make during his second reign as NWA champ. Charisma or no charisma, if he can beat some quality challengers without blatant help from his promoter, we will consider him for a spot in the Top 10 in future issues. Maybe we underestimated him after all.

A perfect newcomer. No, **Mr. Perfect's** name did not make the Top 10 (or even the WWF rankings) this month, but a man who might have learned a little something by watching him over the years did. That man's name is **Prototype**, a WWF developmental wrestler who just happened to be the Ohio Valley Wrestling heavyweight champion when this issue of *PWI* went to press. He came in at number nine, his first appearance in the Top 10 in *PWI*.

Prototype

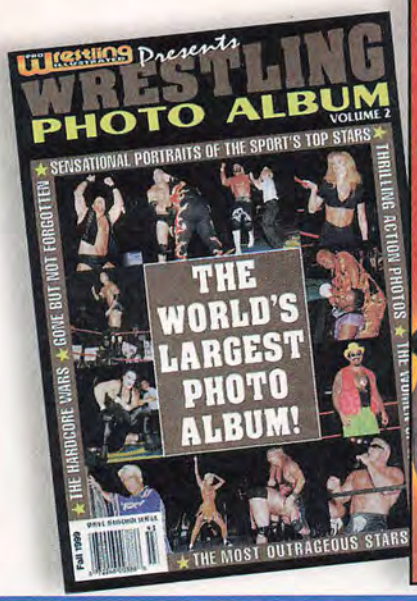
Those of you who aren't familiar with him should know that he considers himself to be the "perfect man." Perhaps Mr. Perfect will have something to say about that once Prototype starts wrestling full-time in the WWF. Could be an interesting intergenerational feud.

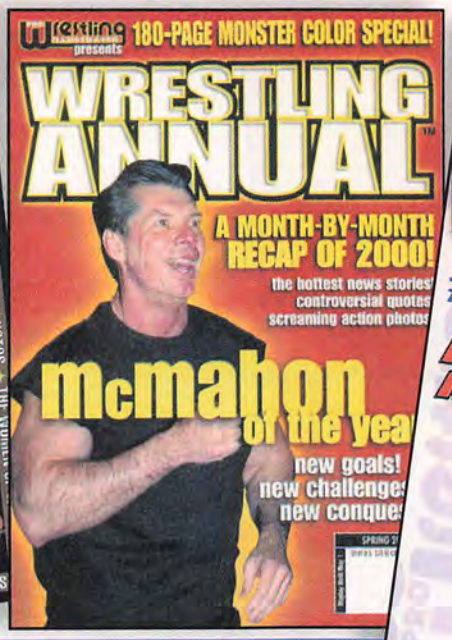
Prototype reminds a lot of people of a young **Sting**, and it's easy to see why. There is a fairly strong physical resemblance between the two men, and Prototype was trained by the man who introduced the "Stinger" and **The Ultimate Warrior** to the sport in the mid-1980s, **Rick Bassman**. Prototype honed his skills in Bassman's California-based promotion, Ultimate Pro Wrestling, for a while before moving on to **Jim Cornette's** OVW. He stunned OVW heavyweight champion **Leviathan** for the belt with a little help from an ether-soaked rag on February 20.

We have a feeling this won't be the last time Prototype makes the Top 10. With the splitting of the WWF into two separate promotions (one getting *Smackdown*, the other getting *Raw*) expected to take place right after WrestleMania X-8, a lot of wrestlers who haven't been getting much TV time lately should get a chance to shine after the split, as will some developmental wrestlers. Perhaps Prototype will be one of them. He has the size, strength, and personality to make an impact on the WWF pretty quickly.

Of course said split will force us to make some changes on our ratings pages. We will wait to see exactly how that plays out before we make any decisions. Look for further updates in future issues.

That's it for this month! As always, if you have any questions or comments regarding our ratings or what you see here, we'd love to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □





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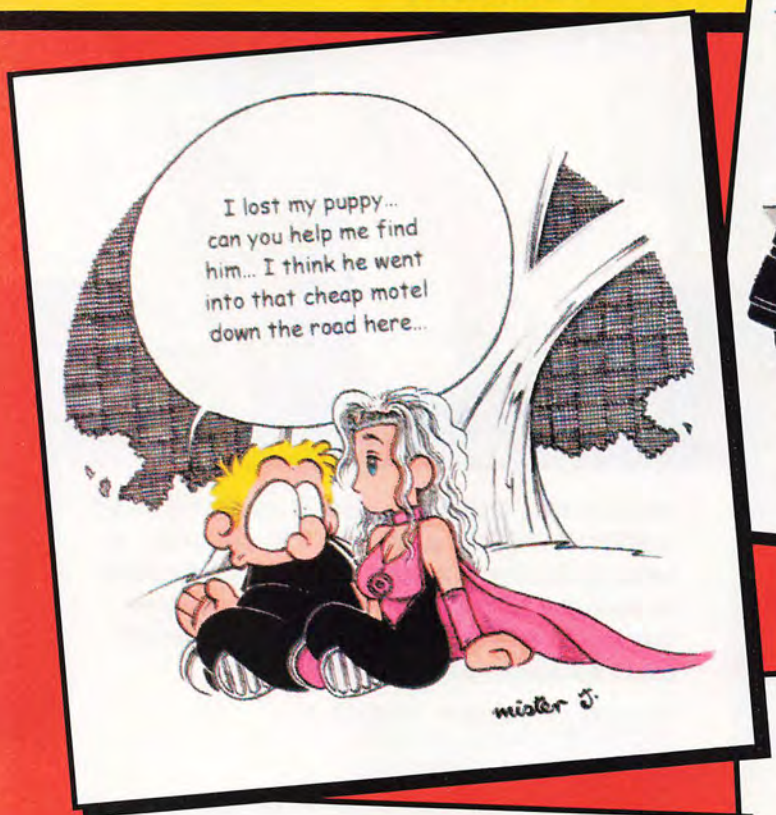
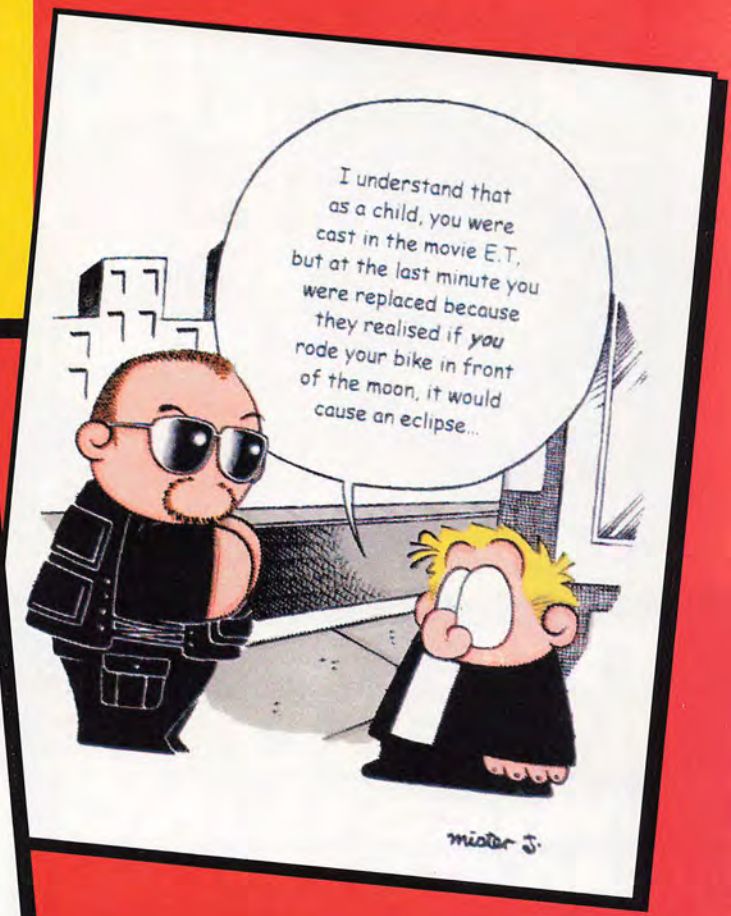
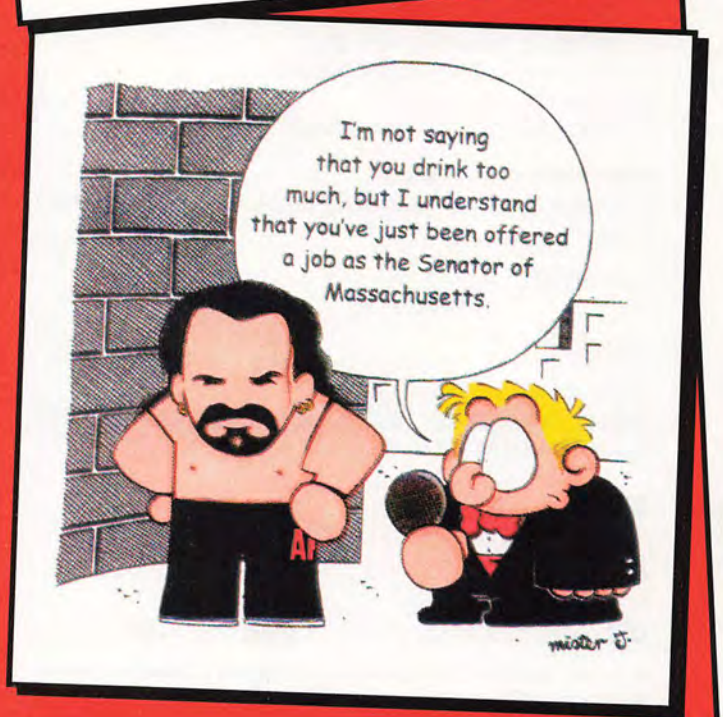
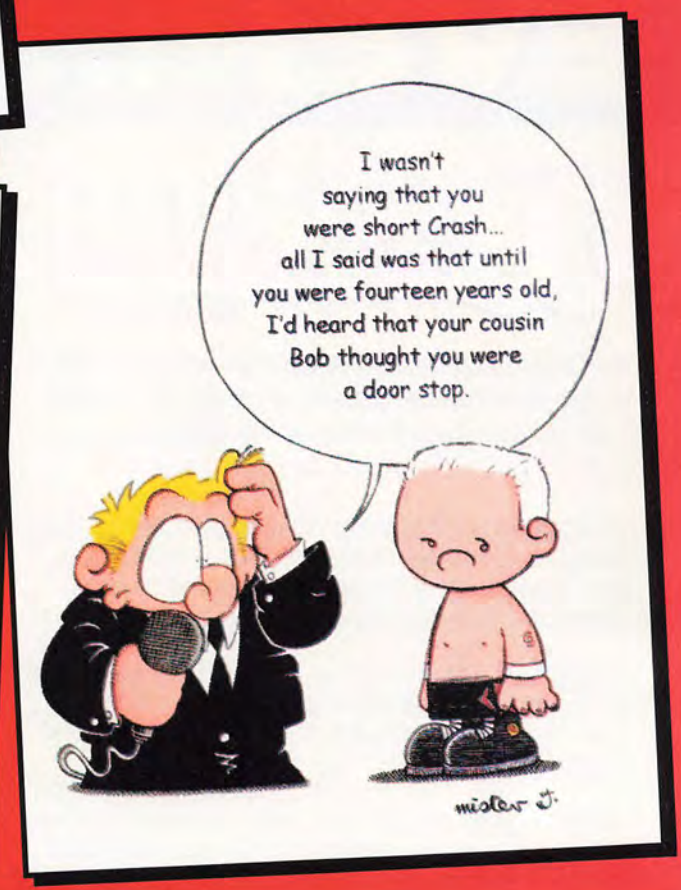
drawing BLOOD

By Jason Conlan




I understand that as a child, you were cast in the movie E.T. but at the last minute you were replaced because they realised if you rode your bike in front of the moon, it would cause an eclipse...
mister J.


I'm not saying that you drink too much, but I understand that you've just been offered a job as the Senator of Massachusetts.
mister J.


I wasn't saying that you were short Crash... all I said was that until you were fourteen years old, I'd heard that your cousin Bob thought you were a door stop.
mister J.

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FALL/80 Rhodes, Rich, Sammartino, Mascaras, Grahams.

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FALL/82 Section: Sexiest Superstar; Albano's teams, Hernandez, Mascaras-Sheik.

SUMMER/83 Section: Bob Backlund; Lawler, Gagne, Sheik, Mascaras, then and now.

FALL/83 Section: WCW Stars; Steve O, Studd, Bruiser.

SPRING/84 Section: Secret Fears; **Color Action Gallery:** Tommy Rich.

WINTER/84 Section: Sexiest Superstar; **Color Action Gallery:** Billy Jack Haynes.

SPRING/85 Section: 10 Most Hated Men; **Color Action Gallery:** Roddy Piper.

SPRING/88 Section: Don't Trust These Men! **Dream Match:** Sammartino vs. Hogan; **Color Action Gallery:** Randy Savage.

WINTER/88 Section: Sexiest Superstar; **Dream Match:** Flair vs. Savage; **Color Action Gallery:** Rick Rude.

FALL/89 Section: 10 Men Who Will Rule Wrestling In The '90s; **Dream Match:** Hogan & Steamboat vs. Savage & Flair; **Color Action Gallery:** The Ultimate Warrior.

WINTER/89 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; **Dream Match:** Elizabeth vs. Sherri; **Color Action Gallery:** Blanchard & Anderson.

SUMMER/90 Section: Greatest Finishing Maneuvers; **Dream Match:** Hogan vs. Luger; **Color Action Gallery:** Hulk Hogan.

AUG/90 Section: Don't Trust These Men! **Dream Match:** Ultimate Warrior vs. Flair; **Color Action Gallery:** Norman.

OCT/90: Section: 50 Strongest Men; **Dream Match:** Tag Team Extravaganza; **Colot Action Gallery:** Steve "Dr. Death" Wiliams.

DEC/90 Section: Sexiest Superstars; **Dream Match:** Hennig-Rude; **Color Action Gallery:** Missy Hyatt.

FEB/91 Section: Wrestling's Next Champions; **Dream Match:** Sting vs. Luger; **Color Action Gallery:** Legion of Doom.

APRIL/91 Section: Teams We'd Like To See; **Dream Match:** Hogan vs. Ultimate Warrior; **Color Action Gallery:** Sid Vicious.

JUNE/91 Section: Wrestling's Best; **Dream Match:** Strongest Man Competition; **Color Action Gallery:** Ric Flair

AUG/91 Section: Top 20 Stars; **Dream Match:** LOD vs. Steiners; **Color Action Gallery:** Curt Hennig.

OCT/91 Section: These Men Must Be Banned!; **Dream Match:** Andre-Gigante; **Color Action Gallery:** The Undertaker.

DEC/91 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; **Dream Match:** Battle Royal of Champions; **Color Action Gallery:** Steiners.

FEB/92 Section: Wrestlers To Make '92 Sizzle; **Dream Match:** Bret Hart vs. Sting; **Color Action Gallery:** Cactus Jack.

APRIL/92 Section: Little-Known Facts; **Dream Match:** Hogan vs. Justice; **Color Action Gallery:** Johnny B. Badd.

JUNE/92 Section: Dangerous Matches; **Dream Match:** Ultimate Dream Supercard; **Color Action Gallery:** Dangerous Matches.

AUG/92 Section: Greatest WrestleMania Matches; **Dream Match:** Kamala vs. Abdullah; Steiners, Sting-Cactus.

SEPT/92 Section: Most Complete Wrestlers; **Dream Match:** IRS vs. Windham; Shango, Owen, Steamboat vs. Rude.

OCT/92 Section: Overrated/Underrated; **Dream Match:** Michaels vs. Jannetty; Money Inc., Olympic wrestlers.

DEC/92 Section: 21st Century Stars; **Dream Match:** R. Steiner & Williams vs. S. Steiner & Gordy; Money Inc., Jarrett.

JAN/93 Section: Great Arenas; **Dream Match:** Halloween Horrors Battle Royal; Steamboat-Austin, Undertaker-Flair, Pillman.

MARCH/93 Section: Hot '93 Wrestlers; **Dream Match:** Hart vs. Simmons; Steamboat-Pillman, Tyson to wrestle.

APRIL/93 Section: Tag Team We'd Like To See; **Dream Match:** Dusty & Dustin vs. Bill & Erik Watts; Badd, Vader.

JUNE/93 Section: Wrestling's Best; **Dream Match:** Vader vs. Yokozuna; Missy & Flair, Windham, Cactus & Orndorff.

AUG/93 Section: Top 20 Stars; **Dream Match:** Rude vs. Madusa; Duggan, Gilbert, Watts, Wippleman.

OCT/93 Section: Ban These Men; **Dream Match:** Hogan & Beefcake vs. Sting & Davey Boy; Miss Texas, Michaels-Doink, Dusty & Dustin, R&Rs.

DEC/93 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; **Dream Match:** Lex Luger's challenge; Michaels, Hawk, Adams, Eaton & Benoit.

SPRING/94 Section: 10 Stars To Make '94 Sizzle; **Dream Match:** Cactus vs. Doink; Sting, Steiners, Sabu.

SUMMER/94 Section: 10 Stars Who Are An Embarrassment; **Dream Match:** Bret vs. Sting; Hogan, Dustin, Vader & Race.

FALL/94 Section: 10 Fan Favorites You Should Be Ashamed To Cheer; **Dream Match:** Vader & Bigelow vs. Yokozuna & Earthquake.

WINTER/94 Section: Turnbuckle Turkey Awards! **Dream Match:** Hogan vs. Hart vs. Vader; Lawler, Flair, Douglas.

SPRING/95 Section: Personal Questions; **Dream Match:** All-time NWA title tourney; Simmons, Hogan, Cornette, Backlund.

SUMMER/95 Section: Top 20 Stars; **Dream Match:** All-time WWF title tourney; DiBiase, Steiners, Inoki-Sting.

FALL/95 Section: Top 20 tag teams; **Dream Match:** Hogan vs. Flair; LT, Sid, Sandman, Lawler, Hogan.

WINTER/95 Section: Superstars Of Tomorrow; **Dream Match:** Undertaker vs. Vader; Diesel-Ramon, Jarrett, Wright, Michaels.

SPRING/96 Section: Report cards; **Dream Match:** Wrestling's Dream World; Diesel, Gibson, Luger-Hogan, Ramon-Kid, Mexicans.

SPRING/97 Section: Top 20 Stars; **Dream Match:** Hall & Nash vs. New Diesel & New Razor; Hogan-Piper, Jarrett, Yoko, Ahmed.

SUMMER/97 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; **Dream Match:** Piper vs. Austin; NWO, NOD, Michaels, Liger.

FALL/97 Section: 20 Tag Teams We'd Love To See; **Dream Match:** Hogan & Savage vs. Hall & Nash; Hogan & Rodman, Bret-Vince, Taz-Sabu, The Giant.

WINTER/97 Section: The Best In 10 Crucial Categories; **Dream Match:** Rhodes vs. Rhodes; Undertaker, Luger & Sting, Dillon & Raven.

APRIL/98 Section: The Most Outrageous Wrestling Stories Of All-Time; **Dream Match:** Cactus vs. Mankind vs. Dude; Richards, Austin, Brawler, Flanagan-Wolfie.

JUNE/98 Section: Superstars Of Today Pick Superstars Of Tomorrow; **Dream Match:** Mike Tyson vs. Hulk Hogan; Shamrock-Owen, Savage-Steiner, Jimmy Hart, Bobo.

AUG/98 Section: Ranking The Sport's 50 Strongest Men; **Dream Match:** WWF vs. WCW vs. ECW; McMahon, S. Steiner, Faarooq, Hall & Nash, Dudleys.

OCT/98 Section: Wrestling's Dangerous Dozen; **Dream Match:** Michaels vs. Helmsley; Dustin, Hogan-Warrior, Ray-Booker, NWA at 50.

DEC/98 Section: Guide To Independents; **Dream Match:** Jericho vs. Maivia; McMahon-Austin; New Jack, DX, Juvi.

FEB/99 Section: Superstars' Report Cards; **Dream Match:** Sting vs. Warrior; Flair-Bischoff, Dusty-Hall, New Age Outlaws, McMahon-Bearer-Austin, Pirata-Vampiro.

APRIL/99 Section: 1998 In Review; **Dream Match:** Ventura vs. Hogan; Sable, Flair, Michaels-McMahon, Wrestling Museum.

JUNE/99 Section: Top 20 Stars; **Dream Match:** Ross & Mankind vs. Schiavone & Goldberg; Debra-Jarrett-Owen, Goldberg, Chyna, Dream-Funk, David Flair.

AUG/99 Section: 10 Stars Who Are Ruining The Sport; **Dream Match:** Vince vs. Bret; Konnan, X-Pac, Mankind, Flair.

OCT/99 Section: Top 20 Hardcore Heroes; **Dream Match:** Shamrock vs. S. Steiner; Owen, McMahons-Undertaker, Taz-Van Dam, Pillman '99.

DEC/99 Section: Guide To Independents; **Dream Match:** Nash vs. Kane; Golbderg, ECW, Jarrett & Debra.

FEB/00 Section: Superstars' Report Cards; **Dream Match:** McMahons vs. Flairs; Edge & Christian, D-Lo, Hall & Nash, Guido.

APRIL/00 Section: 1999 In Review; **Dream Match:** Ultimate Cat Fight; Sting, Vader, Runnels, Baldies.

JUNE/00 Section: The Top 25 Wrestlers Of The '90s; **Dream Match:** Mankind-Rock vs. DDP-Goldberg; Hardys, Rock, Madusa, Goldberg.

AUG/00 Section: Best Match Ever; **Dream Match:** Jarrett vs. Jericho; Kane, Edge & Christian, Young, Cyrus, Wall, Kelly.

OCT/00 Section: Dream Roster; **Dream Match:** Dream Roster Challenge; DDP, Crash, Goldberg, Dreamer.

DEC/00 Section: 2000 Wrestling Guide; **Dream Match:** Survivor Smackdown; Rock, Booker, Malenko, Awesome, Van Dam.

APR/01 Section: Report Cards; **Dream Match:** Team WWF vs. Team World; Angle, S. Steiner, Miss Holly, Nash.

ANNUAL/2001 Section: Best of Good, Worst of Bad; WWF vs. WCW timeline.

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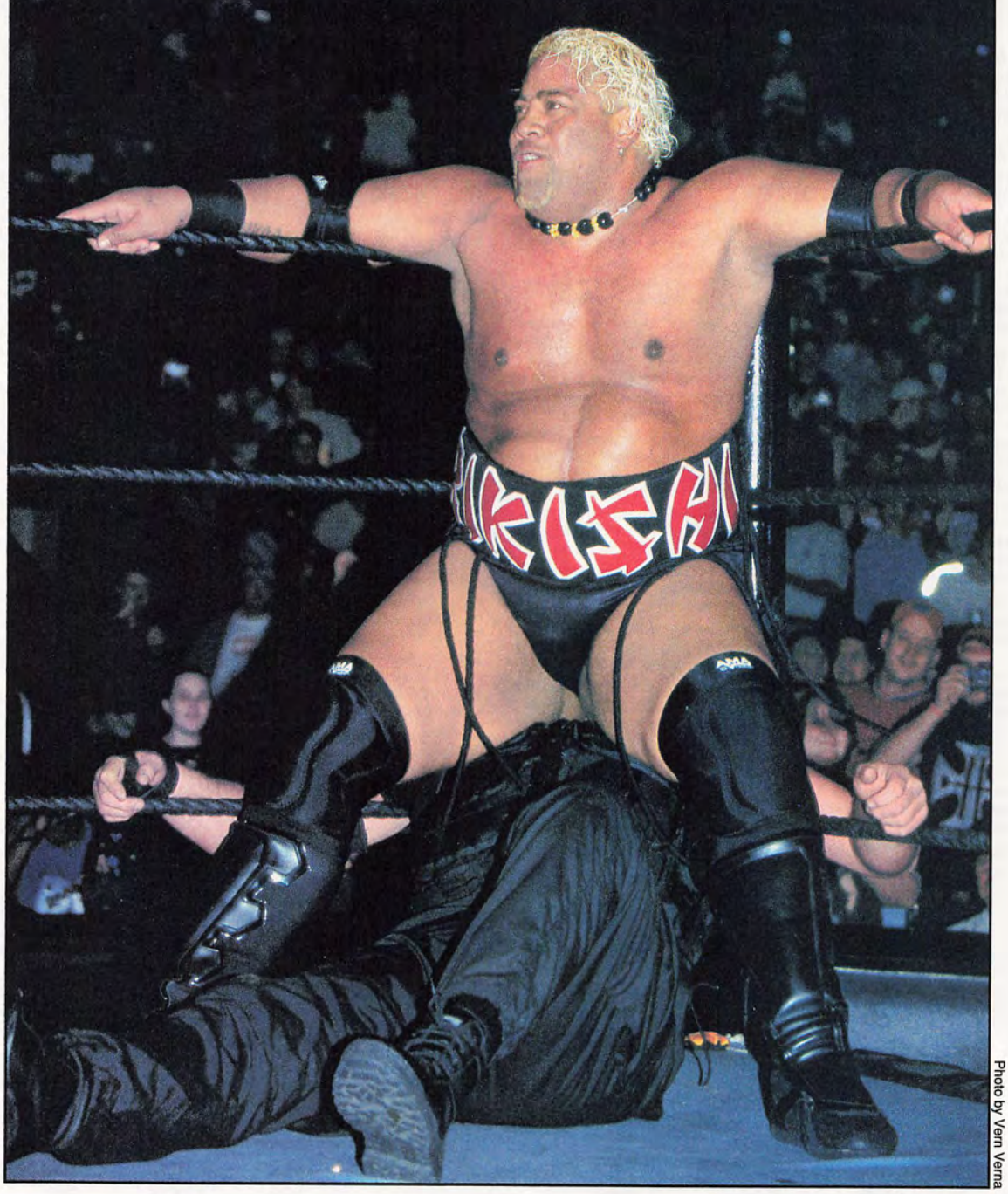
hot shot

Where have you gone, Big Bossman? Check that, where has your head gone, Big Bossman? Check that, we don't want to know. If you read Will Welsh's "Before The Bell" column last month, you might remember coming across a quote from Rikishi in which he told the story of how the stinkface got started. It happened innocently enough in a match with Big Bossman! We're going to assume that the Bossman had no interest in revisiting that historic moment, but Rikishi's obviously reveling in this malodorous march down memory lane. Bossman didn't put up much of a fight once he removed himself from this precarious position. Would you have? Could you have?



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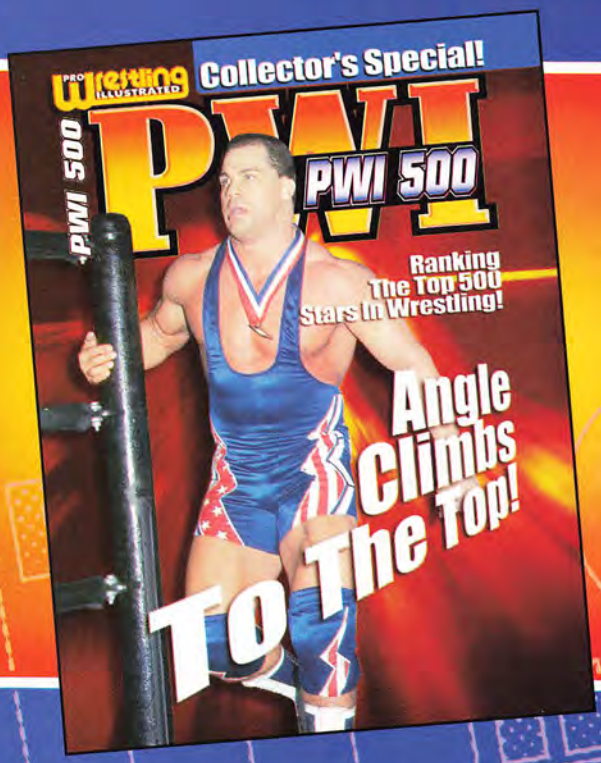

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